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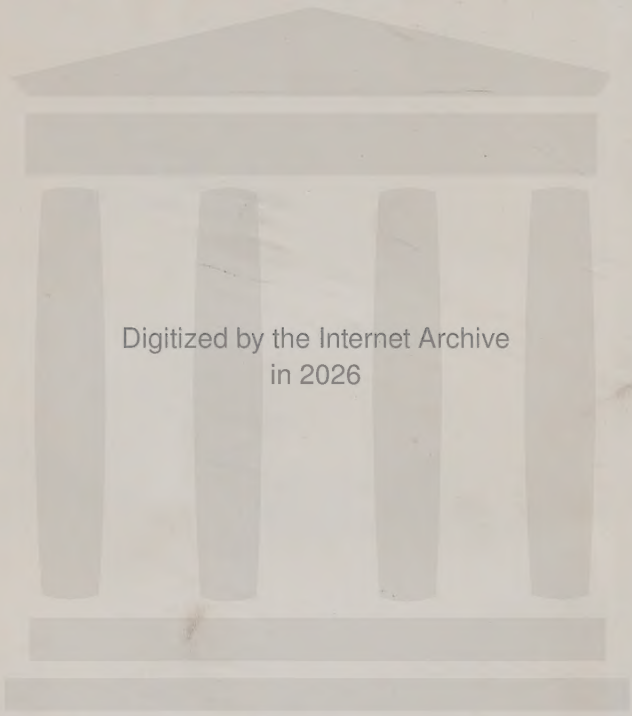

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THE

ENGLISH REFORMATION:

How it came about, and Why we should uphold it.

BY

CUNNINGHAM GEIKIE, D.D.

"Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man. We shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out."
Latimer, at the Stake.

TENTH EDITION.

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THE

ENGLISH REFORMATION.

CHAPTER I.

A GLANCE AT ELEVEN CENTURIES.

ONE of the commonest charges against the Reformation is that it was brought about simply by the violence and passions of Henry VIII. Like *Prospero* in the "Tempest," he is credited with having raised a storm by his unholy arts on a hitherto peaceful and smiling sea. Till he rose all was halcyon: England was made Protestant by him in revenge for the Pope's refusing him a divorce!

Unfortunately for this comforting theory, it ignores the fundamental characteristics of all such revolutions. No great change in religion or politics is, or can be, the creation of any one man. The leaders of such revolutions are their creatures, not their first cause: they simply act as the agent to bring to a crisis long-ripening preparations. A revolution must be in harmony with the spirit of the age, else it could never be accomplished. All the men who ever introduced a new era in politics or religion—Julius Cæsar, Luther, Henry VIII., John Wesley—only took the tide of popular feeling at the full, and were borne on by it to the results they attained. They hoisted the sail, and stood at the helm; but the spirit of the age bore them along. I speak, of course, only of the human side of affairs.

To seek the causes of the English Reformation, then, we must go back through centuries, and, doing so, we shall find that it had long become inevitable. The old state of society under which men had lived had gradually become unfit for the new conditions in politics, religion, social organization, and intellectual activity, on which they had entered. Reform, wide and fundamental, had come to be imperative.

Christianity reached England very early, but we do not know who brought it to our shores. Tertullian, writing in his rhetorical way, about the year A.D. 200, speaks of those places of Britain into which the Roman arms had not penetrated, as being subject to Christ, and even Dr. Lingard, the Roman Catholic historian, owns that, before the close of the second century, Christianity had been received among the tribes of North Cumberland.[1] He adds that "believers in Christianity were numerous, and that a regular hierarchy had been instituted before the close of the third century;" for "by contemporary writers the Church in Britain is always put on an equality with the Churches of Spain and Gaul."[2]

But this early light was destined to a sad eclipse. The first landing of the old English race from the Continent, at Ebbsfleet, in the island of Thanet, in the year 449, was the beginning of a movement which, ere long, well-nigh quenched it. The Celtic tribes which, under the name of British, had hitherto held the land, were step by step overpowered, till they were either driven to the West, or crushed into slaves. The struggle, indeed, lasted for centuries; but when a nation is fighting for its existence, all its institutions feel the terrible strain, and the British Church could not have been an exception. Doubtless, amidst the wreck of the old population, Christianity still kept its place in some bosoms; but the conquerors were rude and savage heathen, and they ruled the land. England needed to be converted a second time. The new-comers were little disposed to take a faith from

[1] Hist. of England, i. 66. [2] *Ibid.*, i. 67.

a despised and hostile race. The impulse must come from without.

It was under these circumstances that Gregory the Great, nearly a hundred and fifty years after the first landing of the English in Britain, sent Augustine, a Roman abbot, to win over our forefathers from their heathenism. Popes had then no such high notions of their dignity as in later times. The Eastern, the Alexandrian, the Gallican, and the Roman Churches, which all, alike, claimed to have been founded by Apostles, were as yet independent of each other, and had, each, its own liturgy; and Gregory did not think of "commanding," but only of exhorting their Heads.[1] The right of the Pope to be the ultimate Court of Appeal in religious matters, was, indeed, already urged, but it was still in dispute. Centuries were to pass before the doctrines we regard as specially Roman were to hide the simplicity of primitive Christianity.

After turning back, faint-hearted, by the way, at the entreaty of the band of monks he had with him, Augustine and they at last landed, in the year 596, in the Isle of Thanet, and were received by Ethelbert, the King, sitting in the open air, on the Chalk-down above Minster. The Queen, Berta, daughter of the Frank King of Paris, was, like her father's people, a Christian, and her marriage had offered an opportunity, which had wisely been seized, for Augustine's mission. A sermon, made longer by needing to be interpreted, explained the object of the strangers, and gained a promise of protection and shelter in Canterbury, the local capital. Thither the band of monks presently set forth, entering it with a silver cross borne before them, and chanting the Roman litany. The Latin Church had found a first home for itself in England, and was in the end to make it her own.

Ethelbert yielded, after a year, to the new faith, and, ere long, a daughter of Berta, going to the north as consort of Edwin, King of Northumberland,—then, in reality lord of the whole of

[1] Gregor. I., by Klaiber; Herzog. v. 327.

England except Kent,—took one of the monks, Paulinus, with her. His queen and Paulinus, between them, soon gained over Edwin, and thus, both in the north and south, the new faith took a nominal root. But heathenism died hard. With the death of Ethelbert came a reaction in favour of the old faith; the Roman Church in Kent sank into inaction; Paulinus fled on King Edwin's being slain in 633, in battle with the heathen king of Central England, or Mercia, and the place of Rome was taken by missionaries of the Irish Church. From Holy Island, in Northumberland, their head-quarters in England, their preachers went forth over the land, and became the real apostles of England. Aidan, Ceadda, St. Cuthbert, John of Beverley, Colman, gave us our Church, rather than Augustine or Paulinus. Not till 664 did Rome succeed, at a Church Council at Whitby, held under King Oswi, in regaining her old footing by pressing on the ignorant Northumbrian the sacred claims of St. Peter. The Irish monks left England rather than submit.

The victory gained at Whitby was not left unimproved. Theodore of Tarsus, a Greek monk, was sent from Rome as Archbishop of Canterbury, and to him we owe the Church of England, as we know it to-day. He added many new sees to the old ones, and linked them all to Canterbury; broke off all connection with the Irish Church; gathered the bishops in successive synods till they all submitted to his authority, and after thus organizing the episcopate, divided the land into parishes, and took what measures he could to provide for the clergy. The Christian faith had at last gained the day. In Central England the Abbey of Peterborough, then, doubtless, a rude enough structure, ere long rose, and the Abbey of Crowland and that of Ely followed soon after. The importance of this wide and systematic action in its influence on the national history cannot be over-rated. The Church had found our island divided into seven or eight distinct nationalities, with no common organization or tendency towards it, but by gradually winning them over to a single faith it had in the end taught them to regard them-

selves as one people. Theodore's distribution of the country into dioceses representing the different kingdoms or provinces of its disunited state, and joining all these into a Christian Church, with a common centre at Canterbury, first woke the national sentiment which has made our country one great whole.

Theodore had founded a school at Canterbury, but the district in which the Irish missionaries had laboured, long remained the special seat of religion and literature. England had had its ecclesiastical centre for a hundred years at Aidan and Cuthbert's cell on Lindisfarne, not at Canterbury, and the light shed from that lonely spot faded away only slowly. The greatest name of the early English Church is that of the Venerable Bede, of Jarrow. Six hundred monks, and many strangers, attended him as students, and alike by his instructions and writings he rightly earned the name of the Father of English learning. Forty-five works on theology, and on all the branches of knowledge then studied, including the classics, remain to attest his industry and attainments ; and his last labour, the translation of St. John's Gospel into English, showed not only his own piety, but the freedom of the Church in his day.

But wars between the different English kingdoms, and afterwards the terrible inroads of the Danes, which were spread over nearly two hundred years, well-nigh undid the work of the two centuries that had passed since Augustine's landing. Letters, arts, religion, government well-nigh disappeared before the heathen Northmen, nor have we any English name associated with a partial restoration of better days till we come to that of King Alfred (871—901). The Danes had almost extirpated the Christian teachers in some districts, and had left them sunk in gross ignorance, where they still remained. To remedy this, Alfred drew round him the learned of foreign countries, translated such books as could be had into English, and founded schools. Fifty years after him another great man—Dunstan—Primate and virtual ruler of England—helped on the good work

thus grandly begun. In an age still almost inconceivably rude, he laboured hard to reform the Church, and to give peace and good government to the people. Unfortunately, he was intensely a monk, and fancied the remedy for Church abuses lay in the spread of monasteries, and the enforcement of celibacy on the clergy. Submission in all points to Rome was a cardinal point with him, but it is to be remembered that Rome was not yet what she afterwards became. Even monkery was little more than a profession of living unmarried, but, as with St. Bernard (1091—1153), the monastic ideal engrossed him. The clergy were thrust out of churches, and monks put in their place; the endowments of parishes were transferred to monasteries, of which he himself founded and endowed forty-eight, setting an example which was widely followed in every part of the land. Hatred was kindled between the ecclesiastical orders thus differently treated, and the monks, whom the Popes ere long made independent of the bishops, and thus free from control, speedily took the lead in the Church, and kept it till the Reformation. Little as he intended it, for he was a man of the purest life and not at all an ascetic, Dunstan in reality introduced a system which in the end grew so utterly corrupt that it fell by its own rottenness. Meanwhile, his restless efforts secured above a third of the land in the West-Saxon kingdom for the Church—that is, mainly for the monks.

The eleventh century had seen a prodigious ecclesiastical activity in Normandy. Monasteries had risen in every forest glade. Lanfranc's school at Bec had become the most famous in Christendom, and round him were gathered scholars who were to be the teachers and master-spirits of the next age. Under William the Norman, Lanfranc became Primate of England, and brought with him his Norman ideas. An Englishman had been deposed to make way for him, and ere long most of the English bishops and abbots were superseded by others from Normandy. For the first time separate courts, for so-called ecclesiastical causes, were granted to these new foreign

prelates, some of whom, however, were exemplary men, and did not abuse the privilege.

But however ready William may have been to serve the Church in this commendable way, he set his face steadfastly against its political ambition. Gregory VII.—Hildebrand—was Pope, and his arrogance had raised the assumptions of the Papacy to the highest. He even called on William to do fealty to him for England, but was met with a stern refusal. The bishops were made strictly dependent on the throne. Homage was exacted from them as rigidly as from barons. No royal vassal could be excommunicated without the royal licence. As in our own day, and ever since the Reformation, no synod could legislate without the king's previous consent, and its decrees were only binding when confirmed by him. His permission was required before any Papal letters could enter the realm, or any Pope be acknowledged. The royal supremacy of the Conqueror was, in fact, asserted and maintained as vigorously as that of Victoria. Even Peter's pence were allowed only as a free gift, not as an obligation, and Lanfranc was not permitted to go to Rome, though the Pope had repeatedly commanded him to do so.

The political intolerableness of the Papal claims lay, indeed, on the surface. Each country in Christendom was mapped out into an all-embracing territorial organization, in which the priest was under the bishop, he under the archbishop, and the archbishop in turn responsible to the Pope, in whose hands all ecclesiastical power was thus finally centred. Besides this, the different orders of monks looked directly to Rome.

This ghostly empire strove from the first to keep itself distinct from the civil power in each country, claiming a higher authority and a loftier origin. Kings were expected to obtain its sanction as a security to their thrones, and to hold those thrones on condition of compliance with its demands. Its courts could try citizens, but it claimed that ecclesiastics were amenable only to its own tribunals. The authority for these was the Pope's,

and the final appeal in all was to Rome, not to the king. The Church was thus a separate kingdom, within any country, governed by its own laws, subject to its own ruler, and independent of the established government and the laws of the land.

The superstition of mankind made such a system a tremendous danger alike to monarch and subjects. As the absolute lord of Christendom, the Pope could foment invasion from abroad and rebellion from within, if his demands were resisted. In any case the Church obtruded itself on every hand into the affairs of daily life. It alone baptized, married, and buried. All wills had to be proved in its courts. It held, as was believed, the keys of heaven and of hell. To offend it was not only to incur spiritual but temporal calamity, for besides the terrors of the unseen world it had at its service the very tangible penalties of the civil law. Under Hildebrand the most audacious claims had already been advanced to a haughty despotism which left the civil government only the execution of its commands.

It was well, therefore, that William resisted it thus early and thus firmly.

The progress of Roman doctrine was, meanwhile, steady. A canon passed at a Council in 1076, permitted such of the clergy as had wives to keep them, for married priests were still too numerous to offend: those who had none were forbidden to marry, and no married man was henceforth to be ordained. The high Romish doctrine of the sacraments also had a powerful advocate in Lanfranc.

Under the Red King (William II., 1087—1100), the Primacy, for a time vacant, was afterwards thrust on Anselm, Lanfranc's pupil at Bec, one of the most able, learned, and worthy men of the age; but a stern and uncompromising Churchman of the Hildebrand school. In one aspect it was a great aid to the liberties of the people that any one should resist the fierce despotism of the crown, but if, at times, the resistance was offered on worthy grounds, at others it was that of

the Churchman rather than the patriot. Thus, after the death of Rufus, Anselm refused, on the ground of a canon of a Roman Council, to do homage to Henry I. (1100—1135) for the temporalities of his see, and demanded that the king should give up the right of bestowing ecclesiastical benefices, and resign the investiture of them to the Pope. The struggle grew keener by continuance, and England was on the eve of a political rupture with Rome, in consequence, more than four hundred years before she finally separated from it. The question of a layman bestowing benefices and securing homage from the clergy was, in fact, convulsing all Christendom in these years. The controversy ended in England, for the time, by a compromise, the king undertaking to forego, for himself, or any lay patron, the investiture of any bishop or abbot by delivering him a pastoral staff and ring, and the clergy, on the other hand, being allowed to do homage for their benefices.

Anselm, like a monk, was fierce in his hostility to the married clergy. The canons of one Council in 1108, strove to enforce celibacy by the unholy means of putting away lawfully-married wives. Even at so late a date were the English clergy, in great part, married men. It was only now, also, that marriage in any case, was forbidden within the seventh degree of kindred,—a law than which none has yielded more money to the Church of Rome, for dispensations from it, or caused more scandal. Under Henry, the first English Council presided over by a legate of the Pope was held. The ancient liberties of the Church were being steadily sapped by the Papacy.

But amidst this absorbing struggle for power on the part of Rome, the national clergy were, happily, to some extent, intent on higher matters. Thanks to men like Lanfranc, Anselm, and the better-minded among the bishops and clergy, the torpor into which the Church had sunk from the appointment, after the Conquest, of foreigners to the higher offices—men cut off by their language and sympathies from their humbler brethren and the people—was broken, and a wave of religious enthusiasm

passed over the land. In the later years of Henry's reign and in that of Stephen (1135—1154), a wide-spread revival of devotion filled the woods with hermits, spread austere monasteries over the moors and forests of the north, and raised lasting monuments of its intensity in the new churches, cathedrals, and foundations, in the towns and cities. In London, St. Paul's began to rise, and the Priory of St. Bartholomew was built in the swamp of Smithfield, besides other churches and monasteries. As yet, the Church in opposing the Crown, had the sympathy of the people, who were glad to see despotism thus bearded, and this sympathy showed itself in such mutual help.

The nineteen years of Stephen's reign were a dismal interval of bitter civil war, in which the Church claimed the right of deposing Stephen and Matilda by turns, but it had the credit, in the end, of effecting the compromise which at Stephen's death left the throne to Matilda's son, Henry II. (1154—1189).

The influence of the bishops was indeed immense. They were the link between the throne and the people, and the defence of both against the barons. The nation as yet accorded them much of the implicit faith and obedience they had rendered their own English bishops before the Conquest, and even the schools into which they and the higher clergy might be said to have been divided, added to their power in the State. The ministers of the Crown were ecclesiastics, and under them were the great body of their brethren, who set their hearts much more on worldly comfort and honour than on their spiritual calling; the prototypes, as Professor Stubbs aptly puts it, of the clerical magistrates of our own day—men far greater at Quarter Sessions or county meetings than in Convocation or missionary work. A second class comprised those who were above all things Churchmen, living and scheming in ecclesiastical politics as their chosen element—men to whom the Pope, the canon law, and the glory of their order were all in all. Apart from them, and far nobler, were those, again, to whom worldly honours and Church ambition were indifferent—men whose souls were set on

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higher things—the saints and martyrs to whom we owe the transmission of true Christian example and teaching.

The new reign of Henry II. is memorable as that of the struggle with Thomas à Becket, who, from a gay courtier, became, on the instant of his consecration as Primate, an ultra-Churchman.

The state of the Church and the country had become terribly deteriorated in the long civil wars. Among the clergy, says a contemporary, were many church-robbers, adulterers, highwaymen, thieves, incendiaries, and murderers. Venality reigned everywhere, from Rome to the humblest archdeaconry. The mass of Churchmen, of all ranks, were ignorant, dissolute, and lawless. Becket himself was a gross pluralist. He had resolved to be head of both State and Church. "Tell the king," said he, in a letter to the Bishop of London, "that the Lord of men and angels has established two powers, Princes and Priests, the first earthly, the second spiritual: the first to obey, the second to command. Tell him it is no dishonour to him to submit to those to whom God Himself defers, calling them gods in the sacred writings."[1]

The bishops' courts established by the Conqueror had proved a mistake. Crimes of all kinds among the clergy were left unpunished. The privileges of sanctuary in churches and churchyards enabled the worst criminals to escape justice. Henry determined to introduce reforms on points that so much required them. A concordat between the Church and State was presented to a Council at Clarendon, many clauses of which were only the re-enactment of the system established by the Conqueror. Bishops or abbots were to be elected in the king's chapel, before his officers, and with his consent. Episcopal lands were to be held as a barony from the king, homage was to be done for them before consecration, and they were to be subject to all feudal burdens, like other estates. The royal permission was needed for a bishop's leaving England. No vassal

[1] Hoveden, vol. i. 261.

of the Crown could be excommunicated except by the king's consent. All this had been the law for a hundred years, but what followed was new. It was to be decided by the king's court whether any question between a clerk and a layman belonged to the Church courts or the king's, and various checks were to be adopted to prevent the encroachment of the former on the latter. The privilege of sanctuary, as regarded property, not persons, was repealed. So far, these demands were only just. It was right that the only civil authority in the land should be that of the Crown; though, in those days, despotism, on the one hand, like the Church on the other, might abuse its rights. But the next clause marked the tyranny of the Norman rule, for Henry was Norman in heart. No serf's son was to be admitted to orders without his lord's permission. The Church was offering an escape from the virtual slavery into which the peasantry were sinking, and this must be stopped.

After earnest resistance, Becket at last signed the concordat, but he presently retracted. He was partly right, partly wrong, partly the champion of the people against the Crown, partly of the Church against law and order. Unfortunately for his fame, he stood out resolutely only against such articles as touched "the honour of his order." The rest he agreed to accept. After six years' exile in Flanders—years filled with violence and excommunications—he was allowed to return, but it was only to be murdered, without Henry's knowledge. His death made Becket a saint and a martyr, but the great king had gained his ends. Ecclesiastical appointments were left in effect in his hands; the bishops remained loyal, and the civil courts kept their power over the ecclesiastical. In the main, the struggle had been for the rule of equal law to all citizens. Becket had claimed exemption for the clergy. The Church remained, as ever in England, rightly subordinate to the State in all civil relations, for the Pope himself had to confirm the Constitution of Clarendon at the Council of Avranches, when he saw that the king was firm.

Henry, with all his genius and vigour, and admirable services to political liberty as against the despotism of the Church, had been a wild, ungodly man. He died with a curse on his lips against God for letting his sons rise against him. Richard the Lion-Heart, his eldest son, who succeeded him, was hardly an English king, for he spent his life abroad. Nor was he a better man than his father, for he passed away bitterly mocking the priests who exhorted him to restitution and repentance; and John (1199—1216), his second son, who next became king, was so ruthless and vile that men whispered that hell would be made still fouler when he entered it.

The first trouble between this worst of English kings and the Church was provoked by himself. Hubert Walter, the Chief Justiciar of England, Archbishop of Canterbury, and Legate, having thwarted him in raising funds for a campaign in support of his relatives in Anjou, roused his fierce wrath, but dying soon after, John, as he hoped, secured himself henceforth from such opposition by making a creature of his own Primate. The monks of Canterbury had, however, already chosen an archbishop, and both parties hastened to appeal to Rome. The reigning Pope—Innocent III. (1198—1216)—was haughtier, however, than was even Hildebrand, and putting aside both elections, commanded the monkish deputies from Canterbury, then in Rome, forthwith to elect Cardinal Stephen Langton, then also in Rome, to the vacant primacy. The choice was admirable, for Langton was an excellent man; but his appointment by the mere will of the Pope was a splendid audacity, which ignored at once the rights of the English Crown and Church. John met the act by defiance, and, when threatened with an interdict, replied that if it came he would banish the clergy and mutilate every Italian found in England. But the Pope was as resolute as the king, and proclaimed the fell curse. All worship except that of some privileged orders, all sacraments except private baptism, ceased; the dead were buried without religious rites and the churches closed. John,

in turn, confiscated the lands of all the clergy who obeyed the interdict, brought them before his own courts, and left offences against them unpunished. Innocent waited for two years, and then proceeded to excommunicate the king. But John was as defiant as ever. Though canonically required to do so, none of the clergy dared treat him as his excommunication demanded. One, an archdeacon, who did so, was crushed to death under weights. A last resource was left to the Pope if he would not be beaten. Holding that John, as an excommunicated man, had ceased to have any rights as king of a Christian nation, he proclaimed a crusade against him, after formally deposing him, by virtue of the alleged right of the Chair of St. Peter to dethrone rulers who offended it; and Philip of France was ordered to carry out the sentence. But John treated the whole matter with such contempt that he allowed the Papal Legate to proclaim his deposition in his own presence, at Northampton, and gathered a huge army on Barham Heath, while the English fleet, crossing the Channel, took some of Philip's ships and burned Dieppe. The Pope was utterly powerless.

John was, however, as base as he was energetic. His reckless vice and cruelty had spread secret conspiracy among his barons, and had thus crippled great plans he had formed for invading France. To break up the plots, and to gain allies for the war, he must be reconciled to the Pope; and seeing that it would be for his advantage to be so, he suddenly humbled himself as meanly as he before had borne himself bravely. Not only would he receive Langton and the bishops who had fled, and restore the money he had taken from the Church: he solemnly resigned both crown and country into the hands of the Pope's Legate, and received them back again, to be held by homage on his part to the Pope as a vassal.

John's object, however, was gained. A French campaign followed, but it ended in defeat. He had intended to revenge himself on his barons when he returned, but they had, in his absence, resolved to demand that he should swear to observe the

laws of the Confessor. Langton put himself at their head, and even protested against his doing homage to the Pope. Next year, at Runnymede, the tyrant was forced to grant the Great Charter. He had fancied that his submission to the Pope would give him immunity to act as he liked to his subjects. Innocent, furious at his vassal being resisted, and at his own feudal dignity as Over-lord of England being treated so lightly, annulled the Charter, suspended Langton from the Primacy, and excommunicated the barons, and the city of London, for supporting them. It was excellent training for future independence of Rome. Lewis, the son of the French king, accepted the crown in spite of Innocent, and landed with an army in Thanet, to join the barons. Meanwhile, the bulk of John's troops deserted him, and in crossing the Wash with the rest he was caught by the tide, and his baggage and treasures were lost. A few days later he was dead, his son proclaimed king, and Lewis, forsaken by the English, was shortly after driven back to France.

CHAPTER II.

THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY.

THE arrogance of the Papacy had shown itself supremely in the evil days of John's reign. To have claimed and exacted homage for the throne of England filled men's minds with disgust: to have annulled the Great Charter roused their fiercest resistance. But these were only two cases of the intolerable assumptions of Rome. Appeals of all kinds were heard there, and commands of all kinds issued, over-riding the King's authority. Richard the Lion-Heart had had to receive a bull from Innocent threatening that "he would punish without delay, and without respect of persons, every one who presumed to disobey his commands." A year after he was Pope, that champion of Romish claims had also levied a tax, for the first time in the history of the Papacy, on the English clergy, and on those of all Christendom, by his own authority, nominally for another crusade. "But," says a contemporary historian, "it will never be applied to the purpose for which it was raised unless the Romans have changed their nature."[1] He acted, in fact, in all respects, the Over-king of Christendom, and ignored all regal prerogatives and national laws. From a benefice to a crown, all things were claimed by him as given and held at his will. He compared himself to the sun, and kings to the moon,

[1] Diceto, quoted by Dr. Henry, v. 433.

shining by his borrowed light. He was the ideal of a Pope, and realized in part what Pius IX. in our own day has claimed in the Syllabus.

Light and shadow were in vivid contrast in the Church in the thirteenth century. If St. Bernard adorned it, he lived protesting against the corruptions around him. In the fifty years ending in 1204, in John's reign, there had been three great crusades to the Holy Land, and in Henry III.'s there were three more, enriching the Church, especially the Papacy, and exalting its power to the highest; raising chivalry to its glory, but also impoverishing the barons; increasing the power of cities and towns; laying the foundation of freedom for the peasantry; extending the knowledge of nations; opening new avenues to commerce; intensifying superstitious fanaticism on the one hand, but, on the other, kindling the first dawn of inquiry and mental activity. It was the age of children's crusades, but also that of the founding of universities.[1] It saw the hideous massacres of the Albigenses in the name of the Pope; and if its infant seminaries woke a spirit of inquiry, the Franciscans and Dominicans were presently founded[2] to tread out the first sparks of mental independence, and the Augustines followed, a little later.[3] It was the age of the Minnesingers in Germany, and the culture of a former generation in Italy, which had produced Arnold of Brescia, spread its widening circle into England in the comprehensive attainments of Roger Bacon, and the acute metaphysical theology of Duns Scotus. Muddy Paris saw its streets for the first time causewayed; but London could boast of few other than thatched houses. The magnet, herald of the compass, was made known in Europe; Italy boasted of the new luxury of the fork at table, and traders were trying to learn the simple Arabic numerals in place of the cumbrous Roman.

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[1] Paris, founded about 1206; Padua, about 1221; Oxford, about 1229; Salamanca, about 1200. [2] A.D. 1210 and 1216. [3] 1256.

In church architecture, the Gothic arch had been introduced, and Cologne Cathedral founded. England, indeed, like the Continent, had long boasted cathedrals, for that of Durham had been commenced in the time of the Red King; Canterbury by Lanfranc, soon after the Conquest; Rochester eleven years after the Norman victory; Chichester at nearly the same time, though not finished till 1148. Norwich Cathedral was founded in 1094, and that of Winchester boasts of an equal age. The vast wealth of the episcopal sees had been devoted in part at least to noble uses by the first Norman prelates—learned and able men, with a taste for magnificence brought with them from the Continent. Since their day the erection of monasteries had been in fashion, for over three hundred had been founded between the years A.D. 1100 and 1200.

In Henry III.'s reign (1216—1272) this wealth and grandeur of the Church had led to inevitable and gross corruption. The local clergy were plundered by Rome; the bishops had become worldly; the ecclesiastical courts oppressive; preaching had well-nigh ceased, partly from the great number of Italians who held English livings; and non-residence and ignorance equally characterized the mass of the parish priests. The Church was thus rapidly losing its hold on the people, when the institution of the orders of Friars for a time won back for it a new popularity. The Dominicans, in their black gowns, and the Franciscans in their grey, passed, in their first earnestness, from town to town, as itinerant preachers, and carried the hearts of the people by storm, and saved Romanism for a while. Everywhere the political ambition of the Papacy, its insatiable exactions, and its abuse of its ghostly terrors for the most worldly ends, were sapping the ancient reverence for it in men's minds. Free-thinking had shown itself in Italy; southern France had thrown off ecclesiastical allegiance, and turned Albigensian; and even in England, though still faithful, the greed of the Popes, their insolent claims, and their political immorality were

rousing bitter murmurs, while the vices of the clergy were alienating men's minds from the Church.

So corrupt were both priests and monks, in fact, that Bishop Grossetete of Lincoln, an admirable man, in his "Constitutions," had to forbid those of his diocese from "haunting taverns, gambling, or drinking, and from rioting or debauchery;" and Lincoln was only a sample of England at large. Benefices were given in hundreds to royal favourites. Boys of twelve were thrust by the Popes on the wealthiest English livings. The monks were steadily absorbing the tithes of the parishes for their abbeys and monasteries, leaving the churches to be served, as might be, by a pauper clergy, or by one of themselves; and they were everywhere buying from Rome exemption from the authority of the bishops. So long back as 1180, the head of the Malmesbury monks had told the Bishop of Salisbury, "Poor and miserable is the abbot who does not utterly annihilate the jurisdiction of a bishop, when, for a single ounce of gold a year, he may buy full liberty for himself from Rome."[1] The monks had, moreover, entirely lost their old influence with the people as the defenders of popular rights, and in becoming rich proprietors had become oppressors of their tenantry and of the poor. Every abbey and rich monastery was in turn the centre of a continuous struggle, often carried to the law-courts, and not seldom leading to violence; the monks striving to retain every feudal privilege; the people as eagerly contending against serfdom and for free municipal rights.[2] Nor were the barons less disaffected to Rome and the Church than the common people, indignantly complaining that the Church preferments held in England by Italians, either living in Italy or intending to return thither, amounted to more than the revenue of the Crown, and that the oppressions of the Court of Rome were intolerable.[3]

[1] Angl. Sacr. præf. p. 4.

[2] See this admirably sketched in "English Popular Leaders," by C. E. Maurice, vol. ii.

[3] Matt. Paris, 666.

Meanwhile, the dignitaries of the Church, and the heads of the great abbeys, had their own good share in the plunder of the people, till the evil grew at last so enormous that the statute of Mortmain was passed in 1279, under Edward I., forbidding bequests to any religious bodies without the king's licence. Bishops and abbots had become great barons, and lived in lordly state, which was growing continually. No wonder that a man like Grossetete, who strove to reform the Church, should have died in feud with Rome. Yet, amidst all this gloom and wickedness, the seed of future deliverance had been sown, for the first Parliament sat in 1265.

If the long and troubled reign of Henry III. had laid the foundations of modern society and government, the splendid career of his son Edward I. (A.D. 1272—1307) saw these rise high enough to indicate the ultimate results. Baron, commoner, and Crown lost on one hand, to gain on the other. Law became supreme. Liberty was safe when it was settled that Parliament had control of the national purse. The Church, however, was unwilling to take its place as a part of the nation, and it required all Edward's firmness and skill to force it to assent to the clergy paying taxes like other citizens, though the higher ranks were so enormously wealthy.

The Romanist doctrines were meanwhile steadily becoming more gross. It was now taught "that both the body and blood of our Lord, nay, the whole living and true Christ, is given at once, under the form of bread (in the Eucharist); and that the wine given at the same time to drink was not the sacrament, but mere wine."[1] The cup was henceforth to be withheld from the laity. Confession also was now made a condition of receiving Communion, and from this time became an essential of the Romish system.

Twelve Popes wore the tiara during the thirty-five years of Edward I.'s reign, but all alike strained the endurance of

[1] Spel. Conc. 2. 320

England by their insatiable claims and boundless ambition. Prodigious sums of money were yearly taken out of the country by pilgrims; by suitors carrying appeals in all manner of disputes to Rome; by bishops going thither for consecration and for the confirmation of their elections; by applicants for Church preferment, which was almost exclusively in the hands of the Pope, and must be bought; by legates and nuncios, who, from time to time, bore off vast sums, raised on various pretences; by the countless Italian priests who were thrust on the richest benefices of England; by the demand for "the first-fruits" of all livings; by Peter's pence; by the yearly tribute laid on King John and his successors, and by many contrivances besides.

Nor had the immeasurable arrogance of the Papacy narrower bounds than its greed. Boasting as it does, to-day, to abate not a jot of any claim it ever made, what shall we think of Boniface VIII. telling Philip the Fair, of France, in a Bull of A.D. 1301, that "you are subject to us, both in spirituals and temporals. You have no right to bestow benefices and prebends, &c., &c. We declare them heretics who believe the contrary"?[1] The Papal crown till A.D. 1061 had been simply a mitre; from that date it had been changed into a double crown, but Clement V., the Pope during whose reign Edward I. died, added a third crown, and thus introduced the tiara,[2] as a symbol that he held not only temporal and spiritual power, but was supreme over all who held either.[3] To such a height had Papal assumption risen.

The slow advancement of mankind was gradually, however, preparing the way for a revolt against this gloomy despotism of the priest. Trifles serve as indications of much beyond themselves. Even in London there were as yet, A.D. 1300, no chimneys, but only braziers in the rooms, and the carriage had not as

[1] Du Pin v. 12. 5.

[2] The tiara was originally the name for a high Persian turban.

[3] Jacobson, in Herzog xi. 92.

yet supplemented the use of the horse, for either sex. But the mariner's compass was now known; paper made of cotton had been invented in France, and of linen in Germany; clocks were seen here and there; mirrors of glass were hung in the chambers of the rich; woollen cloth was being manufactured in England; and the discovery of gunpowder was soon to revolutionize the warfare of the world. Nor was the intellect less busy in other directions. The Schoolmen were in their glory when Duns Scotus died in A.D. 1310. Dante died in 1321, Boccaccio was born in 1313, and Marco Polo's ever memorable journeys in Farther Asia were made while Edward I. was the English king.

The thirteenth century (A.D. 1201—1300) saw the Church rise to its most extravagant pretensions and sink to its deepest corruption. Its worldly splendour was at its height, but its spiritual condition was appalling. All its institutions had been noble in their first years, but success had ruined them. The vast cathedrals had once been the pride of the serf who felt himself on a level with his oppressors when within their walls, and saw the sons of his despised class set above barons and princes as their ministers. But their clergy had gradually secured independence of the bishops, and now transferred their duties to vicars, preferring worldly indulgence for themselves. The appointment of titular bishops had, in the same way, enabled the wealthier prelates to find substitutes, and few of them any longer troubled themselves about their sees, further than to draw the revenues.

The independent episcopal courts, in their early history, had been a bulwark to the weak and oppressed in rough and lawless ages, against civil misrule and injustice. To the Church Europe had owed the Truce of God, which sought, though vainly, to establish a cessation of private or national wars, then universal, for three days a week; it had aided emancipation of the slave in many ways in earlier times; the legislation of its courts against piracy, wrecking, incendiarism, usury, false coin-

age, tournaments, trial by ordeal, and much else, was of benefit to the nation and to morality. But erelong its claims became so excessive, and its tribunals so venal, that they lost all credit, and became a public scandal and oppression.[1]

The efforts to enforce the celibacy of the clergy which had been made unceasingly since Dunstan's day, through more than three hundred years, had only resulted in widespread immorality. The constitutions of Edmund, Archbishop of Canterbury, in the year 1236, accuse the bishops of winking, for payment, at the priests having wives or concubines. The Church laws against married or immoral clergy could not be carried out from the number of the offenders. Thus, though it was required that "they should be removed from their priestly office," the gloss of a contemporary official frankly confesses that "it is the common idea that nobody ought to be removed for simple fornication, since few can be found innocent." The immorality bred by an enforced celibacy, the worldliness of the clergy, their avarice and notorious simony, were by turns rebuked with solemn earnestness by the few faithful men left in the Church, or upbraided with biting sarcasm by the wits of the age. Ecclesiastics, high and low, had, in fact, well-nigh lost the respect of the laity. "You are a worthy man though you be a priest," says a female speaker in one of the poems of the times. Nothing could be more bitter than the language in which ecclesiastical persons as a class are described by the writers of the day.

The enormous wealth of the Church had, in great measure, led to this state of things. The laity had gradually submitted to the demand for tithes; wills of all kinds, and all suits respecting them, were ecclesiastical matters; dispensations for marriage were needed, at heavy cost, on every hand; possession of ready money facilitated purchases of land often at a

[1] For this and the following paragraphs see the extracts from contemporary authorities in Gieseler, vol. iii. 191—300.

nominal value; the safety of property held by the Church led many to make over their possessions to it and rent them again from it, and a thriving trade in mortgages added to the whole.

The monks also had gradually become as corrupt as the rest. There was no end of Orders—Carthusians, Cistercians, Carmelites, Benedictines, and a host besides. Exemption from episcopal authority and growth in wealth had done their work. The abbots obtained, in many cases, episcopal privileges, and in many others forged the right to them. Many parishes were united to monasteries to escape the oversight of the bishops. There were convents for both sexes under the same roof, and men like Bernard in the century before, denounced the pride and luxury of abbots and monks alike. Bernard had, indeed, founded a stricter rule among the Cistercians, which, for a time, gave them great popularity, but they, too, after a while, became as corrupt as others.

It was under these circumstances that the mendicant orders were founded, to try if the laity, scandalized by the corruption of the monks and clergy, could not be won back to the Church. The Waldenses had set the example of devoted consecration to the preaching of the Gospel, and had greatly attracted the people, and from them the idea of the orders of Friars, or Brethren, was taken. From the year 1207 Francis of Assisi had first begun to gather round him a society which should reproduce Apostolic life and labour, in strict obedience to Rome; and such had been the effect of his saintly life, disinterested love, transparent sincerity, and simple preaching, in an age of hypocrisy and vice, that before his death, in 1226, many thousands had joined his order. "The Lord added, not so much a new Order," says a contemporary (in the foundation of the "Begging Friars"), "as renewed the old, raised the fallen, and revived religion, now almost dead, in the evening of the world, hastening to its end, in the near time of the Son of Perdition; that He might prepare new athletes against the dangerous times

of Antichrist, and might protect the Church by fortifying it beforehand. The Lord Pope confirmed their Rule, and gave them authority to preach in any churches, the bishop of the diocese permitting. They are sent two by two to preach, as before the face of the Lord and before His second Advent. These paupers of Christ carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor bread, and have no shoes on their feet, for no brother of this order can own anything. They have no monasteries or churches, no fields, or vines, or beasts, or houses, or lands, or even where they may lay their head. They do not wear furs or linen, but only woollen gowns with a hood: no head coverings, or cloaks, or mantles, or any other garments have they. If any one invite them, they eat and drink what is set before them. If any one, in charity, give them anything, they keep nothing of it to the morrow. Yet not by preaching only, but also by the example of a holy life and blameless conversation do they attract many, not of the poor alone, but of the rich and noble, to despise the world, forsaking their towns, and houses, and great possessions, and giving up earthly wealth, by a happy exchange, for spiritual,—to put on the habit of the 'lesser brethren'—a tunic of no value—and to gird themselves with their cord. For, in a short time, they have so increased that there is no Christian land in which some are not found, for they let all join them, if unmarried, and not already under a vow. All but these they welcome, committing themselves to the providence and love of God, and not fearing for support."[1]

Beginning with professions so noble and, at first, so sincere, it was found desirable, in 1212, to found a Franciscan sisterhood as well, and to this was added, in 1221, a third order—the Tertiaries—of both sexes, who were not required to take the vows of the order, or to live apart, but were rather Associates, carrying out, as far as might be, the spirit of the Order, without

[1] Jacobus de Viliaco, Histor. Occid, c. 32.

leaving their ordinary callings or their place in life. The Order of Dominican Friars, founded at first for the conversion of the Albigenses (1205)—who were soon, however, to be given over to pitiless massacre, when found obstinate—grew, also, apace. A generation later came the Carmelite Friars (1245) and the Augustines (1256); and all these, like the Franciscans, had their sisterhoods and their countless Associates, or Tertiaries, of both sexes.

The Friars were, in fact, the Methodists or Revivalists of six hundred years ago; but it would have been well for them if they had been as permanently faithful to their mission as Wesley's great communion. The people flocked everywhere to their preaching. It was like a new Gospel. Seeing their power to work on the masses, the Pope soon granted them privileges, which speedily corrupted them. Bishops were ordered to secure them a hearty reception, to urge all to come to their preaching, and personally to help them in every way; nor were they to be hindered from confessing those who attended their services. They were to be independent of episcopal supervision, and had the right to bury any who desired it in their churches and enclosures. The door was thus opened for their gaining wealth, and wealth brought spiritual ruin.

Meanwhile, they streamed into England—hailed by the people—hated and feared, in anticipation, by the clergy and monks. Foreigners, they had to beg their way, with only their rags and their mission to recommend them. But they soon learned English enough to begin their vocation actively, and, ere long, every parish priest found them unwelcome intruders on his bounds, for they set up their movable pulpit at any cross, without consulting him, and carried the multitude away by their enthusiasm and the novelty and nobility of their principles and mission. Self-sacrificing love, for the sake of Christ, was the sum of their lives, and the only reward they asked, food and shelter. For a time they kept nobly true to the spirit of their rule. The towns of the middle ages were wretched in the

extreme ;[1] fever and pestilence were permanently established in them, as in modern cities of the East ; leprosy had its special houses, and little care was taken of the wretched inmates. But the Gray Brethren at once betook themselves to the most miserable quarters of the boroughs, and to the foul leper-houses, to alleviate suffering, and, if possible, remove it. Bare-footed by day, they lay without a pillow by night. Their houses were as mean as the wretched hovels around them. True work, honestly done, had its ample reward in enthusiastic admiration.

Their preaching, ready, fluent, and familiar, was no less a wonder. The ignorant mass-priest, who depended on his fees, had been almost the only ecclesiastic with whom the townspeople had hitherto come in contact. The services of the Church were in an unknown language, the ritual was unmeaning, and the pictures or statues on the church walls needed an explanation which they did not receive. In contrast with this the friar addressed the crowd with fervid appeals, rough wit, or telling anecdote, as best suited the moment, with no attempt at studied harangues. It was a religious revolution, and gave the Church another lease of popular favour.

But they did not long confine themselves to preaching, or tending the sick ; they soon aimed also at higher flights. The Universities were in their first glory : humble enough compared with their state to-day, but immensely popular. Thirty thousand students are said to have attended Oxford at one time. The revival of mental activity, however, was dangerous, and the friars resolved to check or at least direct it. Their care of the sick had soon drawn them to study the physical sciences, and their preaching led them to study theology. In 1230 the Dominicans had already gained a theological professorship in the University of Paris, and the Franciscans soon after secured another. The schools of both, at both the English Universities,

[1] See Erasmus' account of an English house even in the sixteenth century. He used to leave Paris every summer for the plague.—Drummond's Erasmus, i. 386.

became famous. Theology resumed its old supremacy, and for a time such men as Roger Bacon, Duns Scotus, and Ockham, gave a true glory to the new Orders.

But the corruption of the rest of the Church erelong invaded the ranks of the Brethren, and speedily brought them to its miserable level. Even so early as 1243, Matthew Paris writes of them—"It is only twenty-four years since they built their first houses in England, and now they raise buildings like palaces, and show their boundless wealth by making them daily more sumptuous, with great rooms and lofty ceilings, impudently transgressing the vows of poverty which are the very basis of their order. If a great or rich man is like to die, they take care to crowd in, to the injury and slight of the clergy, that they may hunt up money, extort confessions, and make secret wills, always seeking the good of their order, as their one end. They have got it believed that no one can hope to be saved if he do not follow the Dominicans or Franciscans. They are restless in trying to get privileges; to get the ear of kings and princes; to be chamberlains, treasurers, bridesmen, and match-makers, and agents of Papal extortions. In their preaching they either flatter or abuse without bounds, or reveal confessions, or gabble nonsense." The monks and the clergy soon came to regard them as their natural enemies, and the peace of the towns was often disturbed by riots caused by their mutual hatreds.[1] "They have begun," says the Archbishop of Cologne, in 1280, "to stir up the authorities and the people of Lubeck, and have expelled the bishop and his clergy from their own town. Having done

[1] See a curious case at Lubeck, in 1280, in Studien und Kritiken for 1828. The occasion of it was that a rich widow had ordered in her will that she should be buried in the Convent of the Franciscans. The clergy, however, kept the corpse and buried it in the parish church. The Franciscans and the relations of the deceased, on that, came and took away the body by force. Hereupon, the bishop and clergy, with the townsfolk and the Dominicans, assailed the Franciscans, and thus a riot was kindled which in the end forced the bishop and his chapter to retire to another town, for the time,

this, they have taken their places, officiating in the different churches and parishes, in contempt of the bishop's prohibition, preaching, hearing confessions, making collections, administering the sacraments, ignoring the commands of the ordinary, and leading the people to cry out, 'Heretic! heretic!' against the clergy, in every street." Even Bonaventura, the general of the Franciscans (1257), in a circular to the heads of the order, inveighs against the greed, the self-indulgence, the importunate begging, the love of grand houses, the keenness to get wills made in their favour, and to secure burials of the rich in their enclosures, to the great annoyance and injury of the clergy, and especially of the parish priests. "We are become burdensome to all men," he adds, in conclusion, "and will be more and more so, if a remedy be not found quickly."

The degenerate Orders had, in fact, early sought to perpetuate and increase the charity of the people by the most unworthy means. Pious frauds were invented, to intensify popular superstition. So widely, indeed, did imposture spread, that the general of the Carmelites denounced his brethren as "hardened vagabonds, liars, praters, useless counsellors, worthless preachers, citizens of Sodom, despisers of their rule, and seducers."[1] Among other fables they asserted that Elijah was their founder, and the Holy Virgin a Carmelite nun, and in common with all the other begging Orders, guaranteed salvation to all their members, even if they took the cowl only on their death-bed. Here and there, saintly natures, or even great intellects, might still claim homage, among the "Brethren," but the thousands of rank and file had sunk to the lowest moral degradation.

The degeneracy of friars, monks and priests alike, was, indeed, only the inevitable result of the profound corruption at the centre of the Church. Italy was, itself, the foulest country

[1] The documents I have translated may be found in Gieseler, as above. There is a fine story of a saintly friar in the Memoirs of St. Louis (1215—1270).

in Christendom, and the Papacy the centre and darkest spot in that foulness. Dante,[1] himself a Roman Catholic, has left us a picture of it that needs no touching. He describes the Popes of the day as men

> Whose avarice
> O'ercasts the world with mourning, under foot
> Treading the good, and raising bad men up.
> Of Shepherds like to you, the Evangelist
> Was ware, when her who sits upon the waves,
> With kings in filthy whoredom he beheld!
> Of gold and silver ye have made your god,
> Differing wherein from an idolater
> But that he worships one, a hundred ye?

He places four Popes of his own day—Nicholas III., Celestine V., Boniface VIII., and Clement V.—in hell, and makes the first say—

> Under my head are dragged
> The rest, my predecessors in the guilt
> Of simony. Stretched at their length they lie.

Nor were things better in Avignon while the Popes reigned there,[2] for Petrarch[3] describes the Papacy then as sitting "as a whore over peoples, and nations, and tongues, toying and confident in the abundance of earthly riches, and careless of the eternal."

Rome, itself, he paints thus :—

> Once Rome! now, false and guilty Babylon!
> Hive of deceits! Terrible prison
> Where the good doth die, the bad is fed and fattened!
> Hell of the living!
> Sad world that doth endure it! Cast her out!

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[1] Born 1265, died 1321.

[2] 1305—1377.

[3] Born 1304, died 1374

CHAPTER III.

JOHN WYCLIFFE.

IT was inevitable that with the progress of the nation in other matters there should be a reaction against the universal corruption of the Church. England had now a Parliament, and the power of the purse was in the hands of the Commons. Great reforms had been made by Edward I. Laws had been passed to secure the public peace; to provide for the recovery of debts, and to check the alienation of lands to the Church. Towns had secured many of their liberties. They had their commercial guilds in all trades. Everywhere, the people were rising into importance.

By the third quarter of the fourteenth century things had come to look ominous for the Church. The long reign of Edward III. (1327—1377) was drawing to a close disastrously. The cruel, frivolous, unreal splendour he had maintained had shown its hollowness on every side. A king who amidst all this halo of mock greatness tricked his Parliament, cheated his creditors, and ruined the merchants of England by using his position to command the markets as a rival trader, a king whose taxes for foreign wars, distasteful to his people, were oppressive, while the burdens for the maintenance of his table were even more so, could not permanently hide himself in the show of a false glory. Pestilences unequalled before or since had wasted England in his reign, and had so raised the price of labour as to force

into prominence the old struggle between the labourer and the serf on the one hand and the privileged classes on the other. Even the bishops, as great employers, had at last, like the monks already, sided against workmen and the peasants, and oppressive Acts of Parliament had aggravated the social war. Edward was now in his dotage and wholly under the influence of a worthless mistress. The Black Prince was sinking under consumption. The people were tired of the endless French wars which had resulted only in the loss of nearly all that had at any time been gained. The lords and knights had been well-nigh ruined by the cost of tournaments and of wars, and by the rise of the labour-market and the bearing of the peasants. Trade was well-nigh destroyed, for the English fleet had been almost swept from the sea.

In these circumstances a large party among the barons turned their eyes on the ecclesiastical wealth around them, which bore as little as it could of the burdens of the land. Between twenty and thirty thousand ecclesiastics of all kinds lived on the earnings of a population of three or four millions—that is, of London alone in our time—and were believed to hold more than a third of England as their property, while their revenue from tithes, fees, and offerings was said to be double that of the crown. Their education, in an ignorant age, had also secured for their dignitaries the highest offices of the State, and this the barons, now better fitted for statesmanship than of old, could not endure. The prelates were thrust from power, and laymen, under the leadership of a son of King Edward John of Gaunt, himself the greatest of the barons, through his wife, took their place. But the new government proved utterly corrupt, and Parliament showed its rising importance by calling it to account. In vain Gaunt tried to overcome it, for the Black Prince, now rapidly dying, supported it, in the interests of his son, and the prelates joined him, to protect the Church from spoliation, so that he could not prevent an investigation of the public grievances. The worst offenders in Gaunt's council were

banished or imprisoned, but the death of the Black Prince overthrew the new government, and Gaunt once more resumed the helm, furious at the audacity of the Commons in interfering with great affairs, and determined to abate the pride, and share the wealth, of the Churchmen who had aided them to thwart him. The new bishops and lords in the Council were dismissed, Alice Perrers, the worthless mistress of Edward, and, with her, the imprisoned lords, recalled, the Acts of the late Parliament cancelled, its speaker put in prison and the possessions of William of Wykeham, Bishop of Winchester, the leader of the prelates against him, confiscated. Hard, tyrannical, ambitious, and worthless, law and right were rudely thrust aside to gain his ends.

At this point, strangely enough, a character of almost unmatched moral and intellectual greatness, destined to pave the way for the Reformation of the sixteenth century, was thrown for the time into connection with this violent and unprincipled man.

John Wycliffe, the future Reformer, was now a man of over fifty, for he had been born about 1324, near Richmond, in Yorkshire. He had, some time before, been appointed Master of Balliol College, at Oxford, and was the foremost living representative of the great schoolmen of the past. Bonaventura and Thomas Aquinas had died fifty years before his birth;[1] Albertus Magnus had been laid to rest six years later, to trouble himself no more with the twenty folios he had given to the world; Duns Scotus had passed away only sixteen years before his birth, and Bradwardine and Occam, their English successors, had been his masters, for he was a young man of about five-and-twenty when they died. Both had powerfully influenced their illustrious scholar. From the former he drew what at a later day would have been called his Calvinism, and the latter gave him the future central principle of his teaching, by grounding the defence of the doctrines of the Church solely on Scripture, and thus, in effect, challenging the whole Papal theory.

[1] Both died in 1274.

The audacious claims of the Popes, now at Avignon, had roused a fierce spirit of resistance, not only in the people at large but even in the clergy and bishops. In the midst of all the social troubles from pestilence, from the cost of war, and from the strife between employer and employed, the demands for money for the Avignon Court rose ever higher, and both king and Parliament had protested fiercely against them. Shortly before Crecy Edward had even ventured to prohibit the entrance into England of any bulls interfering with the rights of private patrons of Church livings, and the Statute of Provisors had been passed in 1351 threatening with imprisonment any one who by accepting a Papal nomination to a benefice assailed the rights of the English Church. But this had been met by the patrons who opposed a nominee of the Pope, being summoned before the Pope's courts to answer for doing so. A counter-blow to such audacity, the famous Act of Premunire, was passed in 1353 prohibiting appeals to any foreign court against judgments of the Courts of England, or the recognition of any authority but that of the King and the Estates, under penalty of outlawry, perpetual imprisonment, or banishment from the country. Even this, however, was not enough, for England was too rich a mine to be readily given up, and the statutes against appeals and provisors had to be once more enacted twelve years later.

But Urban V., the reigning Pope, was little disposed to brook defeat, and met this action of England by a demand in 1365 for thirty-three years' arrears of tribute promised by King John in acknowledgment of the over-lordship of the Court of Rome over the realm. Laid before Parliament this demand brought matters to a crisis, for such an answer was returned that the Pope's lordship over England has never since been heard of.

It was amidst this strife that Wycliffe first came prominently into notice, for the thin retired student was also a man of dauntless spirit, indomitable energy, jealous of the liberties of his country, and already indignant at the corruptions of the Church. Launch-

ing with his whole soul into the controversy, he composed a treatise "On Dominion" which went to the root of the matter, and advanced principles of so much wider application than to the Papal demands alone, as to rouse against him the anger of the hierarchy, as a man dangerous to the interests of their order.

All power, he boldly maintained, was of God, who gave it to no one man exclusively—be he pope or emperor—but to all who exercised authority of any kind, He Himself being the final appeal from all alike. From Him, also, the individual soul held its powers directly, and to Him alone it was, immediately, responsible. The State, likewise, was an ordinance of God, as well as the Church, and as such was also sacred, and might rightfully demand support from ecclesiastical wealth for urgent national wants. The worldliness of the clergy had, in fact, led him to the same attitude towards the great prelates and abbots as the feudal party had already taken, from a desire to make them share the burdens of the State more equally. Himself simple and primitive, he urged that they should voluntarily surrender their corrupting riches and return to the poverty of the first Christian age.

Such views were reiterated a few years later in the interest of the country, when the unhappy turn of the French war demanded new taxes. With an empty treasury, and an exhausted population, Parliament resolved to tax Church property; and though the hierarchy stoutly resisted, all lands got by mortmain since 1292 were made subject to ground-tax, a result which drew on Wycliffe a still deadlier enmity from his dignified brethren, as the champion of a policy so injurious to the interests of Churchmen.

In 1366, through such energetic action, we find him summoned to Parliament as a member by the king, so that from this time he was in the fullest sense a public man, identified, in his views respecting Church property, and the substitution of laymen for prelates in the great offices of State, with the party headed by John of Gaunt, as leader of the baronage, though influenced by very different motives from those of that violent and unprincipled man.

Appointed Master of Balliol College, Oxford, in 1361, when a man of from thirty-seven to forty, he had been presented by the college, in the same year, to a living in Lincolnshire, and had been living there, though retaining a room in the university, during these stormy disputes. But he did not confine himself to such ecclesiastico-political questions as those between the Pope or the bishops and government. The gross corruption of the Begging Friars drew him into a warfare against them, which ended only with his life. They had been settled in Oxford for nearly one hundred and fifty years when he became one of its dignitaries, and though much esteemed in their earlier history, had gradually sunk into the worst repute. It was asserted that, thanks to them, the students, in less than a generation, had been reduced from thirty to five thousand. Even the Chancellor of the University had assailed them as far back as Wycliffe's boyhood (1333), and had carried his complaint to the Pope at Avignon, but nothing had resulted. What had been thus zealously begun Wycliffe now resolved to carry further.

That there were good grounds for this hostility is only too certain from overwhelming testimony. Chaucer, who in 1360 was with King Edward in France, gives a vivid picture of the worthlessness of "The Brethren" as a class. No touch of contemptuous biting satire is wanting. He paints the representative of the four orders as a roystering man of the world, utterly unprincipled and selfish, and with no religion beyond his friar's gown. The author of Piers Ploughman, in the same generation, shows also the general feeling, that religion was to be found only in the lowly, and that society, but, above all, the Church in all its ranks, was sold to sin. In a succession of visions he paints the vices of every class, but of none so fully as of ecclesiastics. He sees Conscience besieged by Sloth at the head of a host of over a thousand bishops, and Antichrist welcomed into a monastery with the ringing of bells. So hopeless is the corruption that he predicts:

> "*Then shall come a king* and confess you Religious,
> And beat you as the Bible telleth, for breaking of your rule,
> And amend solitaries, monks and canons.
> And then shall the abbot of Abingdon, and all his issue for ever,
> *Have a knock of a king, and incurable the wound.*"

The Creed of Piers Ploughman,[1] perhaps by another author, utters the same complaints. A poor ignorant man applies, in it, to the friars, as the most prominent religious personages of the day, to learn their Creed. But the Friar Minor bids him beware of Carmelites, and launches into the fiercest denunciations of their impostures and vices: a fat Dominican in his magnificent monastery, which is described, declaims bitterly against the Augustines: an Augustine rails at the Minorites; and, lastly, a Carmelite abuses the Dominicans, but offers him salvation, without the Creed, for money. Leaving all, alike, with indignation, he finds an honest ploughman in the field, whom the poet paints as Christ Himself, and telling Him his troubles, both learns what he seeks, and hears a terrible invective against all the four Orders.[2]

The same subjects form a great part of the burden of the best poem of Gower, in the same age. Its very title, "The Voice of one Crying" (in the wilderness), is significant. Christ was poor, the clergy heap up wealth; He proclaimed peace, they stir up wars; He gave freely, they are like locked boxes; He spent his life in toil, they live at ease; He was humble,

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[1] A prose composition, called "The Complaint of the Ploughman," given by Foxe, ii. 728 ff., from Tyndale's reprint in the reign of Henry VIII., is also apparently of this age. It anticipates all the demands of after-ages for Church reform.

[2] 1, Dominicans, friars preachers, or Black Friars; 2, Franciscans, or Grey Friars; 3, Carmelites, or White Friars; and 4, Augustin or Austin Friars. By a strange irony the black gown of the Dominicans is now the favourite robe of our evangelical clergy and of the nonconformists! How much less Popish the white surplice of the Primitive Church, in its palmy early times before Popery had begun!

they swell with pride; He was pitiful, they full of vengeance; He was chaste, they were, as a rule, the reverse; He was the Good Shepherd, they devour the sheep. The friar does not obey God's rule, and his own rule is that of the devil.

Thus, in the midst of a social strife, which came to a head in the Peasant Revolt under Ball and Tyler; in the sight of the horrors of times when the Black Death destroyed one half of the population, the poets who spoke for the masses were at one with Wycliffe, that whatever needed to be reformed in the land, a new state of things was urgently demanded in the ecclesiastical world, and, above all, among the four Orders. That there were good men among them, here and there, cannot be doubted, but they must have been utterly degraded as a class to have incurred such universal denunciation.

No wonder, then, that Wycliffe was unsparing in their condemnation. He charged them with selling their prayers and merits; with granting indulgences to sin; with being full of fraud and malice; with begging from the poor while themselves rolling in wealth; with preferring their traditions before Christ's commandments; with being arrant hypocrites; with living in baronial splendour; with persecuting honest parish priests; with cozening the people by making light of sin, for money; with stirring up strife, and much else! Had they not been amenable to such a terrible indictment it could not have been made, for all men would have felt the injustice. But though Wycliffe thus assailed them he was not called to account for doing so.

In 1374 his public position and high standing made him be nominated a member of an Embassy to the Netherlands to meet representatives of the Pope in connection with the vexed subject of Provisors, and he had his reward in his presentation by the Crown the same year to the rectory of Lutterworth, in Leicestershire, which he held till his death, ten years later, though he still retained his public connection with Oxford. But the hatred he had drawn on himself by his alliance with John of Gaunt was a crime not to be forgiven, and his opinions

on the poverty becoming the clergy were themselves a surpassing offence. A charge of heresy was therefore raised against him, and he was cited to appear before the Bishop of London, but as he came accompanied by John of Gaunt himself, nothing could be done against him, and the bishop's court broke up in disorder, though the prelates had at least the satisfaction of seeing the prince assaulted by the mob, to whom he was personally unpopular.

That even one so eminent as Wycliffe should assail an institution like the English Church was intolerable. His adversaries owned that he was "the greatest theologian of the day, second to none as a philosopher, and incomparable as a schoolman;"[1] but so much the more was it necessary to silence him. The Church was in its noon of splendour. The cathedrals of Lincoln, Wells, Peterborough, and Salisbury had only lately been finished. London was full of grand convents of the Begging Friars, and parish churches had been built in almost every street. Nor was the country less bountifully supplied. But, like that of the sun, this blaze was only a veil over the central darkness beneath, and there was a growing conviction that it was so. The awe that had been felt for the Papacy was sensibly diminished by its seat in these years being at Avignon, in France, through intestine strife in Italy. A fierce hatred and contempt of its illimitable greed, extortion, and corruption filled all hearts. Parliament, in its statutes against Provisors,[2] and of Premunire,[3] only expressed the feeling of the nation.

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[1] Knighton, Canon Regular of Leicester Abbey, p. 2644 (a contemporary and adversary of Wycliffe).

[2] The Popes were in the habit of granting benefices during the lifetime of incumbents, and also of reserving what benefices they chose for their private patronage. This was based on a claim they made to dispose, of right, of all benefices in Christendom. "Provision" was the legal term for thus "providing" for vacancies, and against this the Statute of "Provisors" was levelled.

[3] Apparently corrupted from Præmoneri—to be forewarned. It is the

Nor did the clergy by personal worth counteract the growing prejudice against them. With all their wealth, the bishops and abbots selfishly refused to do their part in bearing the burdens of the State. Their courts took no notice of the crimes, vices, and irregularities of priests, monks, and friars, but they worried and fleeced the community at large by their claim to control wills, contracts, and divorces; by the endless dues and fees they exacted, and the countless legal citations of all classes of citizens, on irritating pretexts, to extort costs and fines.

With all this, they were torn by internal feuds and rivalries. Each order of friars, as we have seen, hated the other; the monks hated both them and the parish priests, and the parish priests looked on both friars and monks as their natural enemies. The bishops again, were severed from the mass of the clergy by the shameful contrast between their revenues and the wretched pittance of the "poor parsons," and by their universal struggle for political advancement.

Foiled in their first plot, the bishops would have been contented for the time with the humiliation of their great enemy, John of Gaunt, before the people. But the monks and friars were determined not to let Wycliffe escape, and applied to the Pope, Gregory XI., the last in Avignon before the Great Schism, to take the matter in hand. Ready at all times to interfere in the private questions of nations, this was at once done. Bulls were forthwith sent to the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of London, and the University of Oxford, calling for action against the Reformer; a letter to the same effect, to the king, accompanying them. But before they arrived in England Edward III. had died; his grandson, Richard II. was a minor, and the widow of the Black Prince, the young king's mother, was friendly to Wycliffe.

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first word of the writ. The first Statute of Premunire had been passed in the reign of Edward I., but had been treated with contempt by Rome. So early and so stoutly did England maintain its independence of the Popes even when accepting them as the head of the Church.

The University refused to acknowledge the Pope's claim to interfere, treating it as a breach of its privileges, till letters from the Archbishop of Canterbury at last compelled the Chancellor to send the offender to London, and thither accordingly he went. But though he appeared alone, he was not unprotected, for the Princess of Wales, the young king's mother, sent to the bishops requiring that they should proceed no further against him. He could, thus, well bear himself defiantly, reiterating his obnoxious opinions respecting Church property, and clerical misdoers, and ending with the startling assertion, which he had already circulated widely, and laid before Parliament, in his public defence when first accused by the Bishop of London,—that "it is not possible that a man should be excommunicated to his damage, unless he were first and principally excommunicated by himself,"—a sentiment utterly subversive of the haughty claims of the Church to implicit obedience. But in spite of his bearing, the support of the Crown and the people paralyzed all action against him, and he returned home in peace. At the end of the year, Lambeth Palace saw him once more in the capital, to meet his accusers again, but the people rallied round him and raised such a tumult that the bishop broke up the court, and he again returned unharmed.

Henceforward his course was more determined than ever. In 1378 the Papacy had returned to Rome from Avignon, where it had sat from 1305 to 1377, but it was almost immediately disgraced by the breaking out of the Great Schism, in which rival Popes anathematized each other for over seventy years. He had seen the corruption of the Papacy while in conference with the Papal delegates at Bruges, in 1374, and, now, this schism deepened his convictions of its inherent evil. His brave English heart could no longer be content with the reform of single abuses. He appealed to the government, in writings sent abroad through the land, to reform the Church as a whole, and spared no rank in the hierarchy where he thought it wrong.

"By their fruits ye shall know them" was applied to churchmen as freely as to laymen, and men were urged to study the Scriptures for the principles of their faith and to judge from them, for themselves, as to the claims of those who professed to be their spiritual guides. To Wycliffe the Pope was now "Antichrist, the proud worldly priest of Rome, and the most cursed of money-clippers and cut-purses." Many of the "poor priests," had allied themselves with the Reformer, and numbers of these he sent out, through the country, to oppose a genuine apostolic agency to the corrupt teaching and life of the friars, and to preach against the Anti-christian hierarchy and the abuses in the Church.

A still grander service to his country was presently, however, to be rendered. From the days of Caedmon, in the seventh century, portions of the Scriptures had, from time to time, been translated by worthy men into the tongue of the people, but they had remained fragmentary, and had speedily fallen out of sight. Wycliffe now determined to translate the whole Bible into English, and send it abroad through the land. How new the conception was in his day was shown by the fierce opposition of the clergy. "Christ," says Knighton, indignantly, "delivered his doctrine to the clergy and doctors of the Church, that they might gently administer to the laity and weak folks, according to the want of the time, and the weakness of their minds. But this Master John Wycliffe has translated it from Latin into the Anglic—not the Angelic—tongue, so that it has become a people's book, more open to laymen and women who can read, than it has hitherto been to even the best educated and most intelligent of the clergy. Thus the gospel pearl is cast abroad and trodden under foot of swine. The jewel of the Church is made the sport of the people, and what has hitherto been the chief possession of the clergy is made for ever common to the laity." While Richard II. was on the throne little could be done to suppress the hated book, but under Henry IV., in 1408, many years after Wycliffe's death, the

clergy, met in Synod, enacted that "the translation of the text of Holy Scripture out of one tongue into another is a dangerous thing. Therefore we decree and ordain that no one, henceforth, do, by his own authority,[1] translate any text of the Holy Scriptures into the English tongue. Nor let any such book or treatise composed in the time of John Wycliffe, or hereafter to be composed, be read in whole or in part, in public or in private, under pain of the greater excommunication."[2] It might seem from this as if they purposed themselves to translate it, but they never did so. Wycliffe's only answer to the storm of indignation thus raised at his audacity was worthy of him—"The clergy cry aloud," wrote he in his published defence, "that it is heresy to speak of the Holy Scriptures in English, and so they would condemn the Holy Ghost who gave it in Tongues to the Apostles of Christ, to speak the Word of God in all languages under Heaven." He was assisted in his gigantic undertaking by an unknown band of kindred spirits, of whom the names of only two have come down to us—Nicholas of Hereford, and John Purvey.

The new movement had gradually spread so widely that it now got a name—that of Lollardism, from the Lollards, a religious brotherhood, originally founded in Antwerp about 1300, in a time of plague, to visit the sick and bury the dead. Among other names, that of Lollard was given them from their singing in a soft voice as they bore the dead to the grave. Spreading erelong to Germany, they fell under the dislike of the clergy and the monks, till their name was used, like that of the Beghards—a similar religious order, now degraded into our word beggar—as a mockery, or an innuendo of heresy.[3] Hence it was now applied to Wycliffe's followers, for their opposition

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[1] It was added that, if approved by the bishops, or by a council, translations might be read—but none were ever thus approved.

[2] Wilkin's Concilia, iii. 317.

[3] Art. "Lollarden," Brockhaus' Lexicon, vol. ix.

to the Pope and the Church. Many of these were already found among the better educated, few though that class was then in England, and through them the new translation of the Bible was sure to spread among the people. Others had done a good work in fragmentary translations in past ages, and had paved the way for the labours of Wycliffe and his company; but to these must ever be ascribed the honour of having first given an English Bible to the nation. Their having done so is itself their vindication from the slanders of their enemies. Wycliffe had long had the undertaking in his mind, for there are indications of his having been working at it thirty years before his death; but it was not completed till the very close of his life, and it was not published for some time after he had entered on his reward.[1]

The great work once done could never be destroyed by the utmost efforts of the clergy. Indeed, within a few years, a corrected version was issued by the friends of the Reformer, and so widely was it multiplied that more than a hundred and fifty copies, the majority laboriously transcribed before 1430, still exist, and many more must have been spread amongst the people, in whole, and in the separate books, to leave so large a number in our day, in spite of time and violence. The revised translation, indeed, was everywhere sought after. Copies of it passed into the hands of all classes, even the king and the princes of the blood having transcripts made for them. Many of those still preserved show, in their costly and artistic form, at once the value set on the Word of God thus made accessible, and also that the wealthy alone could have paid the outlay involved. Plainer copies of course are more numerous, for rich and poor alike esteemed so precious a gift. Wycliffe's Bible, in fact, was in secret but general use till the Reformation.

The grand old man was not content, however, with his labours as a translator. From his quiet Lutterworth rectory he

[1] Blunt's English Bible, 20.

sent out in 1381 what must have startled the whole religious world of his day—a declaration against Transubstantiation. But the revolt of the peasants under Wat Tyler against serfdom, after centuries of suppressed resistance, was fatal to the hopes of a reform of the Church by the barons and Commons in Parliament, which Wycliffe had dreamed of obtaining. It was a distant echo, perhaps, of the rising of the Swiss peasants in 1315, which had secured their liberty on the field of Morgarten, or of that of the peasantry of Picardy in the awful Jacquerie, in 1358; but in any case it boded unknown terrors for the future, which broke out at intervals over Europe till it culminated in the Peasants' War of Germany in 1515.

Meanwhile it was dexterously used to cry down every proposal for Church reform, Lollardism being alleged to have been at the root of the rebellion, though Wycliffe threw back the accusation with disdain. There was, in fact, no connection between the two beyond the inevitable recognition by the oppressed in a time of religious excitement, that evangelical religion is ever on the side of freedom, and the fact that as such it has their sympathy. Henceforth, the new opinions were to spread by their own worth; and men must wait for their effect on the existing corruptions.

Hitherto, Wycliffe had been only an earnest advocate for reform of the discipline and political relations of the Church; but in his new attitude towards Transubstantiation and other doctrines he attacked its cardinal beliefs. It was the first protest against the authority of Rome in matters of faith, and heralded the great revolt of the sixteenth century, which established religious freedom, and separated England and Germany from the Papacy. But even the university, which hitherto had favoured him, was astounded at any single man, however famous, standing up, utterly alone, against the world, to condemn what all Christendom cherished as its most sacred doctrine. In a panic of fear it condemned him. But he feared the face of no man, and challenged any one to disprove

his arguments. John of Gaunt, to whom he appealed for support, had no sympathy with a religious question, and commanded him to be silent; but he answered by a reassertion of the obnoxious opinion. Erelong his calm manliness won the university once more to his side; and now, no longer bound by any artificial alliance with Gaunt and his party, he could henceforth act with more freedom and boldness than ever. From the rich and the learned he therefore turned with a true instinct to the people, and sent out tract after tract in racy English, with a rapidity which amazes us as we read their mere titles. He had at last broken the spell which had held even his mind so long to Rome, and soon passed from repudiating Transubstantiation to deny one after another the additions that had been made to primitive Christianity. The Bible alone was henceforth accepted as the ground of faith, and the right to examine it for himself was claimed for every man. The power of granting indulgences, and of binding and loosing, was declared a delusion; auricular confession was superfluous; pardons, pilgrimages to the shrines of the saints, and the invocation of the saints unauthorized; worship of images or pictures, idolatry; the miracles attributed to them were so much fraud; the clergy should live in their benefices; those who farmed these to others should be degraded; and it was insisted that rich prelates, abbots and priests should humble themselves, and enforce their teaching by example.

The time was, in one sense, ripe for such opinions. Wycliffe's poor priests pervaded the land, and spread his teachings among all classes, in city and country. Lollardism was fast becoming the national creed. But the bishops were determined, if possible, to put it down. A council held at Blackfriars, after three days' deliberation, decided that, out of twenty-four propositions drawn from Wycliffe's works, ten were heretical, and the rest erroneous. Forthwith this decision was sent to Oxford, to be publicly read out; but the university authorities would not let it be published. The Archbishop of Canterbury

of the day—Courtenay—however, was determined. The Revolt of the Peasants, and his troubles with the baronage had alarmed the young king, Richard II., and he was disposed to strengthen his position by an alliance with the Church. A royal order was therefore sent down to Oxford to carry out the Archbishop's injunction; but the students rose in tumult, and threatened death to the friars. The university authorities, moreover, suspended a lecturer for calling the Lollards "heretics." But the strong will of Courtenay prevailed. Having tried in vain to induce the Commons to pass an Act against the Reformer and his followers, he obtained a king's writ empowering the bishops to seize and imprison them by the hands of their own officers, those of the king being commanded to assist them. Every pressure was also put on the offenders, till some consented to recant, others were forced to flee, and all Lollard books, as far as possible, had been seized and destroyed. Wycliffe was now summoned before a Synod, in November, 1382. He was at least fifty-eight years old, perhaps over sixty, weak and broken in body, but strong in his principles, intellect, and will. As he had foreseen this issue, he had drawn up and sent abroad a defence, in the form of a petition to the king and Parliament, and it had its effect. The people demanded that the Bill proposed against him in Parliament should be withdrawn, and it was so. Wycliffe appeared before the Synod, and defended himself with such ability and courage, that his judges were forced to content themselves with banishing him from the university, allowing him, however, to retain his rectory. But his enemies were not satisfied. As England would not allow them to wreak their full vengeance on him, they turned to the Roman Curia, asking it to take proceedings against the heretic. In consequence of this he received a summons from the Pope to appear at Rome, which he excused himself from doing on the plea of ill-health. His answer, preserved in what seems to have been a sermon, was throughout in keeping with his life. "I am always glad," said he, "to explain my faith to any one,

and, above all, to the Bishop of Rome; for I take it for granted that if it be orthodox he will confirm it: if erroneous, he will correct it. I assume, too, that as Chief Vicar of Christ upon earth, the Bishop of Rome is of all mortal men most bound to the law of Christ's Gospel, for among the disciples of Christ a majority is not reckoned by simply counting heads, in the fashion of this world, but according to the imitation of Christ on either side. Now Christ, during His life on earth, was of all men the poorest, casting from Him all worldly authorities. I deduce from these premisses, as a simple counsel of my own, that the Pope should surrender all temporal authority to the civil power, and advise his clergy to do the same." No wonder Wycliffe was denounced as a heretic. It was well for him that he was soon to be beyond even a Pope's vengeance. Before it could reach him a stroke of paralysis, while he was performing service in his parish church, removed him to his heavenly reward. He died on the last day of 1384.[1]

A character like that of Wycliffe is an appearance rare in the history of a nation. Luther was not more resolute in his demand for freedom of the conscience, though he came four generations after; and Wycliffe was far in advance of him in the clearness and depth of many of his views. After giving forth his "De Dominio Divino," which touched the limits of Church politics, he had turned exclusively to theology. Ecclesiastical reform took the place of political in his regards. Exhausting that sphere in book after book, and leaving a wonderful ideal of primitive simplicity and purity as his conception of the true constitution of the Church, he passed to the deeper question of spreading the truth. His "poor priests," travelling from village to village preaching the Gospel in the language of the people, was a thought worthy such a man. Like the Apostles, he put, not the sacraments, but the

[1] I am indebted for many facts in this sketch to the German Life of Wycliffe, by Dr. G. Lechler.

"ministry of the word" in the front.[1] Special writings supported this plan, and he himself illustrated it by his unceasing diligence as a preacher. Hundreds of sermons, still extant, are the proof of this. To expound the Bible rather than the Sentences of Lombard or the Summa of Aquinas was to earn the contempt of his contemporaries as a "Biblicist;" but he chose to bear the noble shame, and has left behind notes on many books of both Testaments. His theology was in keeping with all else—manly, intelligent, and Scriptural. His translation of the Bible into English was a gift his country can never over-value. Nor did his influence end with his life. The Lollards, his spiritual children, kept alive evangelical religion in England till the Reformation came, and his influence was unbounded in Bohemia in the generations following his death and even in his lifetime. Some of his writings were already publicly read in the University of Prague in 1381, and Huss had read them in 1390. Jerome of Prague was not the only Bohemian who studied at Oxford, and recognized him as the Evangelical Doctor long after his death. A life which even Dr. Lingard speaks of as "a pattern," and a grand originality which could lead men back to the fountains of truth when they had wandered far from them, make his name as venerable for his worth and genius as the stout-heartedness which dared be singular for God and the right commands our homage to him as a hero.

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[1] Acts vi. 4.

CHAPTER IV.

THE LOLLARDS.

WITH Wycliffe ended the race of English Schoolmen. Ever since the days of Lanfranc and Anselm, great theologians and thinkers of different schools had succeeded each other, generation after generation, and, as always happens, the mere exercise of the faculties had more and more vindicated the right of the intellect to freedom. Wycliffe had been the result in England, but men of his order had risen elsewhere, at different times through the fourteenth century (1301—1400). In Germany the abuses of the Church and the influence of the schools had produced John of Goch, John Wessel, and the Brethren of the Common Lot. In Bohemia, Conrad of Waldhausen, and Milicz of Kremsier sought to revive a purer Christianity, and Matthias of Janow, Canon of the Cathedral at Prague, like Wycliffe, had appealed to the Bible as the one source of Christian faith and practice. Over all Europe there were loud demands for a Reformation.

Richard II., son of the Black Prince, had been seven years on the throne when Wycliffe died, but was, even yet, only eighteen years old. The terrible mortality caused by the Black Death, in the middle of the century, and the destruction of life by the long French wars, had revolutionized the social condition of the peasantry. Mere serfage could no longer content them, nor would they accept the wages given when labour was

abundant. A new era was insensibly beginning, and much suffering and restlessness were inevitable in the transition from the old. The lay and ecclesiastical landowners, unwilling or unable to obtain labour now it was scarce and dear, took to pasturage, merging small holdings into large, and evicting the free-labourers and those who had formerly, as serfs, been bound to the soil, in doing so. Pauperism was thus daily increased, and grew constantly worse in each generation, till it became almost insupportable in the days of the Tudors.

To the disappointment of the bishops, their measures against Wycliffe, and even his death, failed to put an end to the opinions he had spread. As long back as 1382 his followers had been sneered at as "Lollards," and as such they were to trouble the unholy quiet of the Church till the Reformation finally gave them, after all, the victory.

The doctrines of these simple Confessors were wonderfully sound and moderate for such an age. Their central principle was an anticipation of Chillingworth's phrase, that the Bible is the religion of Protestants. A devotional book of theirs, composed not long after Wycliffe's death—"The Lantern of Light"—borrows its title from the words of the Psalm, "Thy word is a light to my feet;" and the preface closes with the prayer, "When Thou, O Lord, didst die on the cross, Thou didst put the Spirit of Life in Thy Word, and gavest it power to make alive, through Thine own dear blood, as Thou Thyself sayest, 'The words which I speak unto you, they are spirit and life.'" Their preaching was called "God's law;" they themselves, "Biblemen." They would receive only what could be proved from Scripture. "I believe," said Lord Cobham, in 1417, when before the Archbishop of Canterbury, "that God requires nothing more from believers than that they obey His holy law. If a prelate asks more, he does despite to Christ, sets himself above God, and is plainly an Antichrist."

The adoration paid to the saints and their images, and the pilgrimages made to these images, were especially disliked by

them. They granted the use of images as permissible, but were earnest against the abuses to which they led. In the Eucharist they saw unchanged bread and wine, even after consecration, but, like Luther, they believed that Christ's body and blood, though distinct from them, were truly present. Some, indeed, seem even to have come nearly to Hooker's view, which is doubtless the right, that the presence of Christ is in the believing recipient. "The power and grace of the Holy Sacrament of the Altar," says one Lollard confessor, "stands far more in the faith in it which one has in his soul, than in the outward appearance." In their doctrines respecting the Church, they put the personal worth of the minister in the first place, holding that the right and fitness of a priest to exercise his office depended on his worth—a doctrine diametrically opposite to that of Rome and of those who regard the priesthood as independent of the man. If a priest was in mortal sin, he should not be paid his tithes—a doctrine we practically admit in our Church courts—and if otherwise criminal, he should neither dispense the sacraments nor hear confession. On the other hand, they held that every good man, if duly educated, is a priest, and that every layman should preach who could—opinions held by many at this day. "It is every priest's office and duty," said one, under examination, "to preach busily, freely, and truly, the Word of God;" he should prove the truth of his words by a holy life; bishops should especially apply themselves to secure conscientious and worthy priests. Auricular confession they rejected, though they valued the counsel and the prayers of a godly minister when one was troubled by conscious sin.

Wycliffe had early found support among all classes. Several knights and barons became his adherents, and in Oxford especially he gathered round him a number of learned men, who became the apostles of his movement. But it was among the people generally that he found his great success, multitudes being won over by his evangelists, who, in long gowns of coarse

russet, with bare feet and a staff in hand, held religious services wherever they could find hearers.

Already in 1382, as we have seen, Courtenay, Archbishop of Canterbury, had sought to get a Bill passed through Parliament to crush the new sect, but failed to induce the Commons to support it. They would not believe his representations respecting them. A royal letter, however, did much, by empowering the bishops to arrest and throw into their own prisons any Lollard preachers they might find. Their success at Oxford has been already told, and they might have fancied that at Wycliffe's death their troubles were over. But his mantle had been caught by his Oxford colleagues. Undismayed by the bishops, they were indefatigable in their missionary journeys, in which they erelong associated with themselves other men of standing. Nor were powerful friends wanting to protect them, or even to protect their meetings by an armed guard like that of the Covenanters in a later day. Books were also written, and these, with parts of the English Bible, served to supply the wants of secret meetings in the absence of the preachers. London and the country round, and the diocese of Lincoln, in which, at that time, Oxford and Leicester were included, and also the dioceses of Worcester and Salisbury, were their chief seats. So numerous did they become, that Knighton says, one could scarcely meet two men in the street but one was a Lollard.[1]

Yet nothing could for the present be done by the bishops. In 1382 the king had married Anne of Bohemia, a woman of an excellent spirit, and a diligent reader of Wycliffe's English Bible. With such a friend at court the Lollards were safe for the time. The barons and upper classes, moreover, were too jealous of any appeal by the Church to the civil power for support, to let it carry out the persecution it desired. A statute passed under the panic of the Peasants' revolt, requiring sheriffs to arrest and imprison all persons charged by the bishops as

[1] For much interesting information on the Lollards, see Die Lollarden, By Dr. G. Lechler.

preachers of heresy, was repealed the year after, the Commons adding the biting remark that they thought it "in nowise their interest to be more under the jurisdiction of the prelates, or more bound by them, than their ancestors had been in times past, and that this statute had never been assented to or granted by them." Meanwhile the bearing of the Church towards them kindled a fiercer dislike to it on the part of the Reformers. Parliament, indignant at the continual interference of the Popes with the internal affairs of the Church in England, had passed the Statute of Premunire, again, in 1392, denouncing the confiscation of all property against any one who solicited or brought into the kingdom any Papal bulls against the rights and dignity of the Crown, and the Lollards followed this up, in 1394, by petitioning Parliament through Sir John Oldcastle, Lord Cobham, to reform the Church. In this document they no longer concealed their opinions, but joined to their denunciations of the exorbitant power, excessive wealth, and profligate lives of the clergy, a protest against transubstantiation, prayers for the dead, the worship of images, pilgrimages, auricular confession, and other points, and declared that the king might maintain from the superfluous revenues of the Church, fifteen earls, fifteen hundred knights, and six thousand squires, besides endowing a hundred hospitals for the poor, providing also an adequate endowment for fifteen thousand parish priests, and drawing, besides, a clear revenue to the Crown of £20,000 a year, a statement accepted as correct, and repeated by Parliament in the next reign. It is no discredit to the petitioners that with these prayers they joined another that war might be declared un-Christian, and that trades which were contrary to apostolic poverty might be prohibited. In all great religious movements, especially in such an age, much that is ideal and extreme always mingles at first with what is practical. Sir John Oldcastle's offence in bringing in such a proposal was, however, never forgotten, and was revenged by his martyrdom in due time.

The Revolution which in 1399 deposed Richard for his

attempt to introduce despotic rule, and put Henry IV. in his place (1399—1413) brought evil days for the Lollards. The new king had been urged to come over to England against Richard by Archbishop Arundel, who, like Henry himself, was an exile, and hoped by his help to regain his see; and the support of the primate had determined that of the Church. Conscious of the badness of his title to the crown, and anxious to secure the support of a body so wealthy and powerful as the clergy, Henry was only too willing to reverse the tolerant policy of Richard, and to put the civil power at the service of the bishops. The barons and Commons were wavering in their loyalty to the Church, but its help was needed to prop up the new throne, and the price demanded for that help was paid at once. To a meeting of Convocation held a week after his accession,[1] Henry announced that he would never ask money from the clergy, except in the most urgent need. He had come, he said, to beg the prayers of the Church for himself and his kingdom; to promise that he would protect it in all its liberties and immunities, and that he would assist them with all his power in exterminating heretics. This last promise was faithfully performed, but he soon forgot the other, for no king ever made more frequent demands from the clergy, when once he was firmly seated on the throne.

The infamous compact was not allowed to sleep. Arundel and the clergy applied at once to Parliament for power to proceed against the Lollards, and Henry, to his abiding infamy, apparently on his sole authority, enacted the hideous statute which first sentenced Englishmen to be put to death for their religious opinions. It would have been vain to have tried to get the Commons to pass it, for they were bitterly hostile to the Church through all Henry's reign. It was not grounded on any petition of Parliament, as is usual with all other statutes in these times, but only upon one from the clergy. The petition and the statute are both in Latin, which is unusual in

[1] 6th October, 1399. Richard resigned the crown on Sept. 29th.

this age, and it was afterwards styled by the Commons "the statute made in the second year of your Majesty's reign, at the request of the prelates and clergy of your kingdom," which seems to imply that it had no regular assent of Parliament.[1] The unutterable shame of such a law rests on the clergy of the day and on Henry, their tool, alone. The Commons of England are clear from the blood of their fellow-countrymen burned alive for their faith, by its authority; but it expressed the sentiment of Rome, for one of the Popes, so long before as 1090, had declared that to kill a heretic in one's zeal for Rome was not to be counted even homicide, far less murder;"[2] while another,[3] still earlier, wrote that "to put a murderer to death is only human law; but the sword that puts to death the heretic is the sword of God: to break the laws of the State, to disturb the peace of citizens, is a serious offence; but to speak or to do anything against the Church, is mortal sin, to extirpate which, root and branch, is a holy work."

The honour of being the first martyr for the Reformation in England fell, almost immediately, to the lot of William Sawtre, a London rector. Tried before Archbishop Arundel, in St. Paul's, he was condemned to die for not believing that the bread and wine of the sacrament, after consecration, "were changed into the substance of the body and blood of Christ;" and Smithfield saw him presently burned alive.[4]

A death so terrible, of one in such a position, struck terror into the hearts of the Lollards. Some, on being brought before the bishops, feigned recantation; others fled; still others hid themselves. It was not till nine years after that a second was brave enough to face the fire.

Meanwhile insurrection after insurrection of the partisans of Richard and of the discontented peasantry followed each other,

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[1] Hallam's Middle Ages, ch. 8. Part III. page 437.

[2] Letter of Urban III. quoted in Art. "Todesstrafe," Herzog's Ency. xxi. 355.

[3] Gregory VII., 1073. [4] 1401.

and the Church had thus the opportunity of casting odium on the Lollards, as identified with these troubles. In the first year of Henry's reign, a conspiracy, headed by the Earl of Salisbury, their leader, had been discovered, and forthwith crushed, Salisbury himself being beheaded;[1] but the Lollards were not discouraged. The bloody head, borne aloft, was escorted into London by a procession of abbots and bishops, who had gone out, singing psalms of thanksgiving, to meet it, but the leadership of the party was calmly transferred to Sir John Oldcastle, Lord Cobham, one of the greatest soldiers of the day. Fresh insurrections, however, natural after such a usurpation, soon followed, and increased Henry's willingness to let loose the clergy on their opponents. The times were becoming more and more critical for the Church, and demanded vigorous action in its defence. In 1403 even the barons proposed to the king to provide funds for the revolt in Wales, by seizing the money and plate of the richest bishops, and the year after, the Commons, on being asked for a fresh grant, repeated the same counsel, alleging that they could pay no more while the bishops, who were beyond measure rich, refused to contribute anything to the necessities of the State. In both cases Arundel by his entreaties turned aside the danger, but it was not forgotten. Two years later, in 1406, he sought to intimidate Parliament and drive it to a fiercer persecution of the Reformers, by hinting that as the temporalities of the bishops were threatened now, those of laymen also would soon be invaded. But the Commons refused to be alarmed. Pestilence presently added itself to the misery of the times, but in the midst of plague, famine, and civil war, the Church thought of its worldly interests so supremely as to pass canons in Convocation urging the fiercest persecution of its opponents.

The whole of Christendom, however, was now full of the ecclesiastical scandals of the day. Since 1378 the Great Schism

[1] Jan. 6, 1400.

had shown two Popes anathematizing each other with all the curses at their command. A spectacle so shocking, added to the abuses and corruption already monstrous, had at last roused even kings to demand reform, and hence a Council was summoned, in 1409, at Pisa, but its members were soon obliged to acknowledge that there was no possibility of improvement while a Pope was in power.[1] Their first act had been to depose both the reigning Popes, and to elect another, pledged to reform; but once elected, he either could or would do nothing. The University of Oxford, still true to Wycliffe's influence, had its delegates at Pisa, to help forward reforms specially wished in England. Pluralities held both by bishops and clergy, and often even by Italians ignorant of the language; the exemption of the monks from episcopal control; the Pope's dispensations for non-residence and pluralities, and the bribery and evasion of justice resulting from the enforcement of appeals to Rome, were among the abuses to be remedied. But the deputies had to return without success. Even the Schism was made worse, rather than removed, for the two deposed Popes would not resign, and, by the election of another, there were now three.[2]

Such anarchy at Rome, and such universal confession of intolerable corruption everywhere, encouraged the Lollards both in and out of Parliament. Scarcely was the failure of the Council at Pisa known, before the Commons petitioned for a repeal, or at least a mitigation, of the statute against heretics, but Henry was too much in the power of the Church to humour them, and vindicated his loyalty to the bishops by letting them burn a poor man at Smithfield. Indignant at this renewed outrage, the Commons refused to grant him, except for a year at a time, a subsidy he demanded in perpetuity. Nor were they turned from their hostility to the Church, but tried for a third time to pass Sir John Oldcastle's bill for taking its excess of property for the uses of the State.

[1] Gieseler, iv. 279.

[2] Gregory XII. 1406—1417. Benedict XIII. 1394—1424. Alexander V. 1409—1410.

Under Henry V. (1413—1422), the Church was at last to triumph. It was imperative that Lollardism should be stamped out, if reform was to be refused. The world *would* move in spite of the priests. Paper-mills had been busy in Germany since 1390, making the multiplication of heretical books the easier. By land and sea the mind was astir. The Canary Islands had been discovered as long ago as 1395. Teachers from Constantinople[1] were revealing the treasures of ancient Greek literature, with its lessons of liberty, and John Huss had been teaching the doctrines of Wycliffe, in Bohemia, since 1398. A young king, pledged to the Church, as the son of a usurper whom the clergy alone cordially supported, had mounted the throne of England, and at any cost the bishops would use him to crush the new opinions.

Their first attack was on Sir John Oldcastle, Lord Cobham, the leader of the Reformers, whom they persuaded Henry to arrest in his castle and throw into the Tower. Arundel hated him as a pupil of Wycliffe, a receiver of the New Light, and a protector of poor Lollards; as one who despised monks and friars, read the Bible on his knees, and drew from it a condemnation of many things taught by the Church. Moreover, he had set his face against the new policy introduced by the primate from Spain, of burning men alive for their opinions. He was, besides, a friend of free inquiry. To have him arrested was to secure his being sent to the stake. Forthwith Arundel decided that he was an obstinate heretic, and handed him over to the civil power, to be burned in due course. But in a respite of fifty days, granted him by Henry as a personal friend, he managed to escape, and fled to Wales, where he lay hid till 1418.

The danger of the leading Reformer was to be the ruin of the cause. The report was raised that the Lollards had begun to plot the death of the king, and it was added that 25,000

[1] Chrysolaus, 1395—1415

were to meet in the fields of St. Giles, under the command of Sir John Oldcastle, as the beginning of a general rising. The whole story had apparently risen from some meetings held to petition for the mitigation of the penal laws under which they suffered. At midnight on the 14th January, 1414, some months after Henry's accession, he set out with a great force to encounter the army of insurgents, but found only a gathering of about eighty persons at one spot, and a few more at another. Many of these were killed, many other known Lollards in London arrested, and thirty-nine of them put to death.

Meanwhile Arundel was called to his account (1414), and was succeeded by Chicheley (1414—1443)—a Carthusian monk—who at last succeeded in putting off the Reformation for more than a century. His first care was to secure fresh helps to hunt down the Lollards. By his influence a new statute was procured from the King's Council—apparently without the concurrence of the Commons—giving judges and magistrates power to arrest all persons suspected of belonging to them, binding them by oath to do their utmost to uproot the heresy, and enacting that offenders should suffer confiscation of goods and lands to the king, and death by fire. Four years after, while Henry was in France, the vengeance of the bishops and clergy at last fell on Oldcastle. Having been taken by treachery in 1418, the Archbishop and his Provincial Synod had the satisfaction of declaring him an incorrigible heretic, and of hanging him in chains over a slow fire till he was roasted to death. But the people revered his memory as the "Good Lord Cobham," and Shakspeare recorded his opinion of him that "Oldcastle died a martyr."

Chicheley had done good work for the Church before this crowning triumph. It seemed doubtful if the most relentless persecution would succeed in stopping the general demand for a Reformation, and Lollardism threatened not only to survive, but to spread. If the young king could but be led into a foreign war, it would divert the attention of the people from

domestic questions, and secure the Church at least a respite. Unjust claims on the throne of France were therefore invented, and urged on the king by the Primate and his party. Shakspeare, borrowing from the chronicles of Hall and Holinshed, has kept the crime from ever being forgotten.[1] The Commons had introduced once more the old bill, the terror of the bishops, to empower the king to appropriate, for national uses, the superfluous wealth of the Church, or, as Hall puts it, "of the temporal lands devoutly given and disordinately spent by religious and other spiritual persons." "This bill," he adds, "was much noted and feared amongst the religious sorts, whom, in effect, it much touched; insomuch that the fat abbots sweated, the proud priors frowned, and the poor friars cursed."

Chicheley only too skilfully fanned the warlike spirit of the king till he succeeded in launching England on a war which lasted for thirty-eight years and brought untold miseries on the nation. But it served the ends of the Church, and left it unreformed for over a hundred years, for the Wars of the Roses sprang from it, and immediately followed it for thirty-two years more.

Henry crossed to France in August, 1415, and the magnificent victory of Agincourt on the 25th October diverted the thoughts of the country from anything but military glory. The Church, however, kept steady to its purpose of crushing the Reformers. Chicheley had a poor furrier brought before him exactly a week after Henry had sailed for France,[2] and having failed to get him to recant had him burned at Smithfield. Next year (1416) he issued a Constitution requiring strict search for all Lollards, or persons suspected of being so, and great numbers were thrown into prison—the goods, lands, and property of all who were convicted, being confiscated. So things went on till Lord Cobham's martyrdom, two years later. The

[1] Henry V., Act 1, Scene 1.

[2] He sailed on Aug. 10th from Southampton. Claydon was burned on the 17th.

king's absence left the Church free to persecute the new opinions to the death, and it did it eagerly. The ecclesiastical annals of the last years of Henry's reign record hardly anything but the trials of heretics.[1]

Yet the Church was more than ever in need of sweeping reform. The Council of Pisa, in 1409, had ended in failure. Alexander V., the Pope it had elected instead of the two it had deposed but could not get to resign, died the next year, poisoned, as was believed, by the Cardinal Balthazar Cossa—an ex-pirate—who wished to succeed him. This he now did, under the name of John XXIII.—a name which has left a stain even on the dark annals of the Papacy. No crime could be too dreadful to lay justly to his charge. For seven years he shocked Christendom by the spectacle of an infallible head of the Church openly accused of perjury, simony, adultery, incest, plunder of the Church, and of such a life every way, to use the words of the Council of Constance, as "openly scandalized Christendom."[2] For the time, however, he was its official head, and found himself forced, sorely against his will, by the demands from every government in turn, to summon another General Council at Constance in November, 1414. Henry had acted so far independently as to order the University of Oxford to draw up a list of abuses the removal of which was then to be demanded, and this they did in forty-six articles, of which two may serve as a sample of the rest. The one was, that the clergy confiscated to themselves all the goods of any Jew they forced to submit to baptism, and the other that the debauched lives of the clergy and their public impurity were never punished by the bishops except by a small fine. "It would, therefore, be well," it was added, "if priests of every rank and order, known for their lewdness, were required to abstain from saying mass for a short time." A deputation from Oxford, still true in a measure to the teaching of Wycliffe, attended the Council in

[1] Wilkin., Concil., 390—417.

[2] Sentence of deposition by the Council, in Gieseler iv 298.

due course, but that body had other work on its hands than reformation.

A frightful charge against the Pope, which he did not attempt to deny, led to his deposition in the end of May, 1415. The object of the Council was to get both him and the two other Popes out of the way, and by electing a fourth, to close the Great Schism which outraged Christendom. Gregory XII., an old man of over eighty, resigned in July, but Benedict XIII., though deposed two years later, clung to his office till he died in 1424.

This attempted removal of a scandal which was undermining the Church was, however, varied by more agreeable occupations. The habit of the age for students to pass from one university to another, over Europe, had carried the books and opinions of Wycliffe to Prague, and the marriage between Richard II. and Anne of Bohemia, by bringing Bohemians to England, had further spread both, when these returned to their own country. Of some of the books, a priest, named John Huss, confessor to the wife of the Emperor, the "good Queen Anne's" sister, got possession, and they made him a Wycliffite. Organizing travelling preachers, as the English Reformer had done, he soon raised a strong feeling in Bohemia against the iniquities of Rome. Unfortunately for himself he was persuaded to go to the Council of Constance, trusting to a written safeguard from the Emperor Sigismund, and a certificate from the Inquisitor-General of Heresy in Bohemia, that, as far as he, the Inquisitor knew, he had not impugned any article of the Christian faith. But, like Wycliffe, he had dared to believe that liberty of conscience was a universal right. He had come with joy on the imperial pledge of a fair hearing, and of a safe return to Bohemia, but Sigismund basely broke his oath, and Huss was almost at once arrested, and forced to defend his life before the Council, by which he was soon after condemned. Looking at the Emperor as the sentence was delivered, a blush which has passed into a proverb reddened the cheeks of the perjured

monarch, though in order to satisfy him for his breach of his safe conduct, the Council had issued the shameless decree, that no faith should be kept with a heretic. It was the 6th of July, three months before the Battle of Agincourt, and the same day saw him led to the stake. From among the faggots rose a steady hymn of trust in God, till the smoke and flames choked the firm voice, and concealed the singer from the people. Ten months after, the Council added Jerome of Prague, the friend of Huss, to the number of martyrs. He was burned in May, 1416.

It was not enough, however, for the Church to condemn and burn the living: vengeance must be wreaked on the dead. As far back as 1412, Arundel had forced the University of Oxford to examine and condemn the writings of Wycliffe, and it had consequently extracted no fewer than 267 propositions from them, which were declared to be partly heretical, partly erroneous. These were sent to the Archbishop, who forwarded them to the Pope, asking their official condemnation, and craving permission to exhume the body of the Reformer, and cast it on a dunghill, to be trampled under foot. But it might have been dangerous, as yet, to have roused public feeling by any outrage on the dead body of the great teacher; and only his doctrines were for the time condemned.

The Council of Constance, however, had no such scruples. In its eighth sitting (4th May, 1415) it declared the great Englishman a heretic; condemned forty-five articles from his writings, and ordered his books to be burned, and his bones dug up and cast far from consecrated ground. This last command, however, remained unfulfilled for twelve years more, when the Pope (Martin V.) ordered the Bishop of Lincoln to carry it out. This he did the next year. After the honoured remains had lain forty-four years under the choir at Lutterworth they were dug up, and having been burned, were scattered on the waters of the neighbouring Swift. But, as Thomas Fuller says, the Swift conveyed them to the Avon, the Avon

into the Severn, the Severn into the narrow seas, and they into the main ocean! The liberty of the human soul for which Wycliffe had lived, was only furthered by the attempts of its enemies to crush it.

How thoroughly Christendom had by this time been roused to demand reform was seen at Constance. Gerson, Chancellor of the University of Paris, though a keen opponent of "heretics," was intent on abating some, at least, of the most notorious abuses in the Church. "A Pope," said he, "is a man descended from men, earth from earth, a sinner, and subject to sin. A few days ago the son of a poor peasant, he is exalted to the Papal chair. Does such an one become a sinless man, a saint, without the least repentance for his sins, without confessing them, without contrition of heart? Who has made him a saint? Not the Holy Ghost; for it is not dignity of station that brings the influences of the Holy Ghost, but the grace of God, and love; not the authority of the office, for it may be enjoyed by bad men as well as good." "Where," he went on, "will you find charity in a Pope? At the Roman court the daily talk is of castles, of territorial domains, of the different kinds of weapons, of gold; but seldom or never of chastity, alms, righteousness, faith, or holy manners: so that the court, once a spiritual one, has become a secular, devilish, tyrannical court, and worse in manners and civil transactions than any other." No wonder that, under the influence of Gerson, then the foremost Churchman in Europe, and a man so devout that the authorship of the famous Imitation of Christ has been widely ascribed to him, the Council declared itself above the Papacy.

CHAPTER V.

THE CHURCH BEFORE THE REFORMATION.

WITH the death of Henry V., in 1423, the ecclesiastical history of England may be said to have slept till the close of the century; for foreign and domestic strife in succession left the Church to go on its way undisturbed, and under its blighting shade the soft spring green of reformation gradually withered away, though the roots were still quick in the soil.

The Great Schism had for the time humbled the Papacy, but with the election of Martin V., in 1417, its most intolerable claims were revived. Yet it never regained its lost position. On the continent, as well as in England, its demands for jurisdiction over secular affairs were challenged, and ecclesiastics were not seldom brought before lay tribunals; the interference of the Church courts of Rome with the affairs of other nations was prohibited, and the decrees of Pope and clergy, alike, were often examined before their publication was allowed. Nor was the accumulation of Church property allowed to go unchecked. The Free Towns, and many princes, followed the example of England, and either forbade it, or required legal sanction for each acquisition.

In England, a desperate attempt was early made by the revived Papacy to get at the national wealth once more, by procuring the abolition of the law of Premunire. Chicheley,

attended by the other bishops, went in person to the House of Commons, and with tears and prayers entreated them to repeal an Act so obnoxious to the Pope; but they knew too well the object, and would not listen to the request. To have done so would have enabled the Roman priests once more to have sold the presentations to all the benefices of the kingdom for their own profit, or to have filled them with absentee Italians.

The suppression of Wycliffism in Bohemia was not an easy task. The Council of Constance issued instructions to put it down by civil war, and the Pope, in 1420, supplemented these by proclaiming a crusade against the Reformers, which he repeated in 1428 and 1429; and monthly processions were ordered in England and other countries, to draw down divine vengeance on the offenders and gain recruits, the tempting bounty being offered of pardon of all sins to any who died in this holy cause.

Meanwhile, the Pope, sorely against his will, was at last compelled by public opinion to summon a new council at Basle, in 1431, to reform the Church. But, before it met, he died, and his successor, Eugenius IV., marked his estimate of his character by making war on his family, and compelling them to disgorge the Church lands and Church moneys they had received from him. To the indignation of the new Pope, the Council had no sooner met than it renewed the decrees of the Council of Constance, setting itself above him, and summoned him and his Cardinals to attend it. On his refusing, judicial proceedings were begun against him, and after this, he yielded in every point. All the claims of the Papacy and the Roman Court to receive benefices and churches for themselves and to extort money from the clergy were abolished. Diocesan and Provincial Synods were ordained; frivolous appeals were made illegal; the rash use of Interdict was forbidden and annates[1] were suppressed.

[1] The first year's income of all benefices, which the cormorants at Rome claimed.

Rome, however, would not surrender its shameful revenues without a struggle, and threatened to remove the Council to Italy, where it could be controlled. It answered by an impeachment; on which the Pope declared it removed to Ferrara, but the Fathers met this by pronouncing him suspended, and by deposing him two years later, and electing another Pope, Felix V. Europe, however, had suffered too much by the Great Schism to encourage its renewal, and the Council lost so much weight by its schismatic action, that it henceforth dwindled in numbers till it virtually ended in 1443. To have nothing more to do with Councils became the watchword at Rome, and its policy summed itself up year after year, in stealthily trying to win back all that they had taken from it.

In England, during these years, the persecution of the Reformers still raged. Henry V. had left a boy of nine months his heir, and the government had passed into the hands of a council of lords and churchmen. Lollardism had kept the Church in fear of losing its temporalities, and such treason must be suppressed at any cost. In the year when the Council was gathering at Basle (1431), the Wycliffites were still so strong that bands of soldiers were sent hither and thither to put them down wherever they could be found. The barons no longer endangered the treasures of the bishops, for they found gold and plunder to their content, in sacking the towns of France, and in the ransom of prisoners. Hence, if Reform were once crushed, the Church might breathe freely. The year 1433, therefore, saw more burnings at Smithfield; numbers sentenced to imprisonment for life; others publicly whipped, and still others punished in different ways. Henceforth, the Lollards drew back into concealment, and were little heard of till the Reformation. Terror had done its work for the time so thoroughly, that in Jack Cade's revolt of the peasantry, once more, against serfdom, in 1450, nothing at all was said of religious reform. Still, evangelical religion was not extinct, but once and again burst out like suppressed fire.

Chicheley's long reign as primate ended in 1443. He had saved the wealth of the Church, and had given its abuses a new lease of life, but it had been by the terrible crime of stirring up a war which demoralized England for generations, and filled the land with misery. All Souls' College, at Oxford, founded in part from funds obtained by the dissolution of some foreign priories, and partly at his own cost, remained as a vain attempt to atone for his offence. It served, however, one end he little anticipated. A century later its origin was cited in vindication of going farther in the same direction, by dissolving the monasteries as a whole.

The sturdy English spirit remained still erect, though the Church had its outward triumph. In 1465 an unfortunate who had been excommunicated appealed to the civil judges. Brought before them, from the Archbishop's prison, the court decided that he was not guilty of heresy by law, and set him free. In the early stages of European history the reign of the Church had served a great end in providence by inspiring hitherto barbarous tribes with the common influences of a great politico-religious State. It had given them much in common, in politics, religion, manners, social life, and literature. But the progress of mankind had gradually brought national feeling into play, and everywhere excited resistance to encroachments on the independence of the separate states, from whatever source. The Papacy, still seeking to interfere and dominate in all things, found itself more and more opposed in every part of Christendom, and this sign of independence in the English courts was but an illustration of the general tendency of the age.[1]

The Papal claim that all Christendom was so wholly subject to the Pope that he might tax it at his pleasure had been revived in these years, but met a stern dismissal when attempted to be imposed on England. In 1447, Eugenius IV., flouting

[1] Ranke's History of the Popes, i. 24.

the decree of the Council of Constance, demanded a tenth from all English benefices, and sent a golden rose to Henry VI. to bribe him to help, but he lost the rose and did not get the money. In 1453, Constantinople had been taken by the Turkish barbarian, and the calamity promised to be a mine of wealth to the Roman court. Ten years after it, Pius II.—one of whose letters commending his illegitimate son to his father's care was recently read at the Antonelli trial at Rome—fancied he could get the money his predecessor had failed to obtain, on pretence that it was to be spent on a crusade against the Turks. But Edward IV., slave to the Church as he was, would not even let the Bull be published in England. He had, as he thought, done enough already; for, two years earlier, to get the Pope's support to his unsteady throne, he had granted him, without getting the consent of Parliament, the repeal of the statute of premunire, which had been upheld by generation after generation of English kings and statesmen. Still more, he had given the clergy a charter freeing them from responsibility to the civil courts. Rome had apparently snatched a long-delayed victory, but it was speedily to repent its selfish pertinacity. The short reign of Richard III. was to be almost the end of its glory. The corruption of the Church over all Christendom, seen more and more clearly by the kindling intelligence of mankind, was hastening its ruin through the whole of the fifteenth century.

"Some years before the rise of the Lutheran and Calvinistic heresy," says Cardinal Bellarmin, "according to the testimony of those who were then living, there was an almost entire abandonment of equity in the ecclesiastical judgments, no discipline in morals, no erudition in sacred literature, no reverence in divine things: religion was almost extinct."[1] Hence the cry for reformation was echoed and re-echoed over Europe. The Abbot of Spanheim, about 1485, describes the clergy as ignorant, rude, and murdering the sheep of Christ by their

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[1] Concio xxviii., opp. vi. 296, ed. 1617.

infamous morals. "No holiness of life," he writes, "no education, no purity, is now required of candidates for ordination. The priests sit drinking in taverns, or spend their time in amusement and eating. How many errors, fables, and heresies they tell the people in their preaching, who could suppose that did not know! Instead of books they beget children, instead of study they seek concubines. The bishops are little better. They have either no copies of Scripture, or few, for they hate knowledge. They are set only on heaping up wealth. Let not the priests wonder if the laity despise them, since they themselves despise the commands of Christ. I fear greatly that worse times will come for the clergy ere long."

The unchastity of the ecclesiastics as a body seemed only to increase in proportion as it was assailed. The Councils of Constance and Basle failed to secure even outward propriety in a large number of their members. "Look with your own eyes," cried a speaker at Constance, "at the clergy of the Roman Curia, who, since before the time of the Great Schism, have borne the reputation of being more than humanly depraved; look at the clergy of this diocese, who are no better; aye, look at the clergy of this very town, and of this very Council itself! Have they, from respect to this reverend synod, before whose eyes they live daily, even in the least amended their profligate lives? The clergy from Rome keep their mistresses here, openly and shamelessly, before all; they sell justice publicly, and are foul with every kind of moral leprosy as hitherto."[1]

The licentiousness of the clergy was, indeed, so open and infamous that a whole literature of protests against it, in all parts of Christendom, still remains. The serious lamented it; wits made it the butt of ironical stories and biting fables. It was impossible to punish where nearly all were guilty, and the bishops were not the men, in that age, to carry out discipline,

[1] Speech of Petrus de Pulka, Professor at Vienna. Gieseler, v. 9.

when to wink at it might be made profitable. Hence, after, for a time, reaping a harvest of fines for clerical lewdness, they finally, in effect licensed it, by commuting these for a permanent annual tax paid by the mistresses of priests.[1] The enforcement of celibacy on ecclesiastics had borne its fruits, as in previous ages, and even now, when Protestantism is not at hand to watch it.

With such an example in the clergy, the immorality of the laity increased, till hideous diseases broke out over Europe as its result.[2] The whole tone of life, indeed, was incredibly low. Our French wars, erelong, degenerated into massacre and brigandage. Only such prisoners as could pay ransom could hope for life, and, thus an English privateer writes to the Council to ask whether he should not drown the crews of a hundred merchant vessels he had taken. The incessant wars; the hereditary misery of the lower classes; the sweeping pestilences and famines which so often recurred, had kept the population down after four hundred years to little over double the two millions of the Conqueror's day.[3] Before the French war, which Chicheley had stirred up to stave off reform of the Church, was ended, both England and France were so much exhausted that they could hardly bring 10,000 men into the field on either side. The empire left by Henry V. had dwindled from a first to a fifth-rate power. The thirty years of civil war that followed the French wars had worn out the country. All the French conquests were lost except the March of Calais, and a French fleet kept the English coast in alarm.

When Henry VII. snatched the crown at Bosworth Field, in 1487, the condition of England, in every way, was to the last degree wretched. In the Wars of the Roses, two kings had been

[1] Gieseler, v. 11. [2] The *Lustseuche*, unfortunately known since in every part of the world. It is an inheritance from the glorious "Catholic Ages," and the direct result of the immoral example of the Pre-reformation clergy. Gieseler, v. 13. [3] The population of England and Wales was estimated even in 1377 at 2,092,978: in 1483 at 4,689,000.—Haydn's Dict. of Dates.

murdered in the Tower, ten princes slain in battle, and half the peerage had perished. The towns had fallen into decay, and land went a begging for purchasers. Tillage had been neglected amidst the wide anarchy, and the peasants, banded in great gangs, roamed the country, to sell their services to either side, and filled the land with robbery and violence.

Literature had died out in the general chaos. The poets of Henry VIII.'s day were not yet born, and those that had followed Chaucer were long forgotten. Even history was left without a better chronicler than Robert Fabyan, of the Drapers' Company, who has left a few fragments and annals, in which his day's sales are set down as of equal moment with the story of a battle.

But, as England had fallen Rome had risen. Amidst the ruin of noble, citizen, and peasant, the Church had continued to prosper. Superstition was too timorous to lay violent hands on anything ecclesiastical. A castle or a mansion might be sacked and burnt, but the jewels of the richest shrines in church, cathedral, or convent, were safe, without a bar to the gates. The Church grew daily richer while misery spread like a flood over the land.

Religion still lingered in households like those of the Pastons, and in a monkish cell or chamber, here and there, but it had given place, as a rule, to the most debasing superstition. When Erasmus was in England, in 1509, he reports that it was "incredible what a world of bones, skulls, chins, teeth, hands, fingers and whole arms," were preserved as sacred relics at Canterbury, to be adored and kissed by the innumerable pilgrims to the shrine of Becket. "The gold and silver on that saint's altar," he continues, "seemed to make Crœsus a beggar in comparison." In the vestry the pomp of silk vestments and gold candlesticks was wonderful. The foot of Becket was shown, in a rod of silver longer than to a man's waist, and the saint's whole face, set in gold, and adorned with jewels. The bones of the body were kept by themselves, unseen, but a chest of

gold over them—into which the offerings of pilgrims were put,—was exhibited, and showed wealth beyond computation. Gold was the meanest part of it. Everything sparkled and shone with very large and scarce jewels, some of them larger than the egg of a goose—the gifts of kings and nobles. The cover being taken off," says he, "we all worshipped." A black leather trunk was produced and opened, all falling down in reverence. It contained rags so uninviting that on the prior giving Dean Colet or Gratian Pullen, a secret Wycliffite, who were with Erasmus, a present of a piece of one, he could not restrain his disgust, and, after taking it squeamishly in his fingers, laid it down with an air of contempt, making a mocking noise with his lips instead of a reverential kiss.

Another visitor, in the same age, leaves us a fuller inventory of the relics shown at Canterbury to excite the faith and secure the money of the throngs of pilgrims. He saw there a fragment of the robe of Christ; three splinters from the crown of thorns; a lock of Mary's hair; a shoulder-blade of Simeon; a tooth of John the Baptist; blood of the apostles John and Thomas; part of the crosses of Peter and Andrew; a tooth and finger of St. Stephen; some hair of Mary Magdalene; a lip of one of the innocents slain by Herod the Great; the head of Thomas à Becket; a leg of St. George; the bowels of St. Lawrence; a finger of St. Urban; a tooth of St. Benedict; bones of St. Clement; bones of St. Vincent; bones of St. Catherine the Virgin; a leg of Mildred the Virgin; and a leg of a virgin saint called Recordia. He saw besides, in the cloister, a fountain which flowed at times with water, at others with milk, and at still others with blood. It had been five times changed to blood, and just before his visit it had been changed to milk![1]

But Canterbury, with its throngs of pilgrims, had not a

[1] Rozmital, quoted in Dixon's Two Queens, i. 124.

monopoly of wonders. Our Lady of Walsingham, a Norfolk village, was another notable shrine, which attracted even greater crowds of pilgrims; and of this also we have, fortunately, an account by Erasmus. "You will scarcely find anyone in the island," says he, "who thinks his affairs can be prosperous unless he yearly make some present to that Lady." There were different chapels, the first of them "as if it were the seat of all the saints, it was so glittering with gold, and silver, and jewels." In the inner chapel a canon stood to receive the offerings. At the north side was a gate in the wall, with a very small wicket, and through this, the verger said, a knight on horseback, fleeing for sanctuary, escaped. Praying to the Virgin, he passed at once, on horseback, through a space hardly large enough to let a man on foot enter! A picture of the knight and his horse on a plate of copper, nailed on the door, attested the miracle! Another chapel was also full of wonders. Among others, the middle joint of one of St. Peter's fingers—"large enough for a giant"—was shown. There was also a house before the chapel, that had been brought there, on a sudden, from no one knew where, and under it two wells, which were said to have burst suddenly out of the ground at the command of the Virgin, and to be of sovereign efficacy to cure pains in the head and stomach. A flask of the milk of the Virgin was shown, and Erasmus wonders how any woman who never had but one child should have had so much milk, up and down Christendom, "though her child had never sucked a drop." He quietly classes the fraud with that of the relics of the cross exhibited everywhere in such profusion that they would load a ship if gathered together. Money was demanded as each relic was shown in the different chapels. The Virgin's milk, here, had been drawn direct from her breasts, but what was shown elsewhere, he was told, had dropped on the stones as she sat, at different times, and had been scraped up and miraculously multiplied! Statues of the Virgin, of gold and silver, stood in another part, and in the same

place "a world of relics which he could not even name in a day."[1]

Such was the religion of the age in one of its aspects. Each shrine had its letters written by the Virgin, or by angels, to support the gainful impostures exhibited. As Erasmus and his friends rode away from Canterbury, some friars ran out of a cottage by the roadside, and, after sprinkling the strangers with holy water, held up a piece of an old shoe to kiss—of course for money—as that of St. Thomas. Everywhere there was a fresh imposture. "There is so much superstition," writes James the Carthusian, a monk of the end of the century, "there are so many of the worst and most scandalous practices in the churches, as well of the secular as of the regular clergy, that all religion seems well-nigh choked, as if the enemy of souls had sown tares over the wheat." So many doubtful saints were added to the calendar, that Cardinal Bessarion[2] declared that it made him doubt the truth of the legends transmitted from antiquity respecting others. A monk boldly maintained in a sermon in 1509, in Vienna, that the priests did not show true relics, but put the bones of beasts in their reliquaries.

The amazing inventions in vogue as the staple of religious teaching cannot be better illustrated than by quoting one or two from the multitude used to recommend the rosary to the faithful. The Roman Church is especially indebted to the "Blessed Alain de la Roche," a Dominican friar, for that contrivance, and certainly no one could have been more fertile in pious fraud to introduce it. It had been used before, but had fallen into neglect, when, as Alain asserts, the Blessed Virgin appeared to him in 1460, and commanded him to proclaim that it was specially dear to her; that the Hail Mary had, in the past, emptied hell and filled heaven, and that the rosary, which

[1] Erasmus' Colloquies, 335—363. First published surreptitiously in 1518, but by Erasmus himself in 1522. The visit to Our Lady of Walsingham took place, apparently, in 1505 or 1506, on the second visit to England.

[2] Died 1472.

was composed of Hail Marys, was that by which the world must now be reformed. With that she hung round his neck a rosary, the string of which was made of her own heavenly hair, espoused him with a ring of the same hair, and then blessed him with her virgin lips, and fed him at her holy bosom! Such was one of the fables as to the origin of the rosary,—let me quote one from thousands used to extend its use. A Spanish maiden had provided herself with a rosary, after hearing St. Dominic preach in its favour, and told her beads with sufficient regularity, but showed no other amendment of life. Two suitors fought for her and killed each other, on which their relations seized her, cut off her head, and threw it into a well. The devils took possession of her soul, supposing they had a right to it, but they were wrong, for, by having used the rosary, she had gained such favour with the Holy Virgin, that her soul was taken from them, and allowed to live in the head till she could be confessed and absolved. Ere long, all this was revealed to St. Dominic, who forthwith repaired to the well, and called on the head to come up. The bloody head thereupon came up and perched on the well-side, and entreated his assistance, saying that she must pass two hundred years in purgatory, unless he and the Society of the Rosary would befriend her with their prayers. Then the head made confession, was absolved, and received the wafer, after which it continued to preach to the people for two days. These over, it died, and at the end of fifteen days the soul appeared in glory to St. Dominic, and thanked him for having, by the rosary, delivered it from the place of penance.[1] What ideas of religion must have been prevalent, when the worth of prayer was supposed to lie in the endless mechanical repetition of set forms and phrases!

The lying miracles,[2] forged relics, and unfounded legends of the priests were bitterly exposed by Erasmus and many others, but the

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[1] Quoted by Southey from Possadar. Vindiciæ Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ, 483.

[2] See p. 73—77.

gross ignorance of the people was proof against enlightenment. The number of saints, of places of pilgrimage, of pious frauds, and monstrous legends, grew constantly. Bleeding wafers were often exhibited, and boys were introduced on the altar as heavenly visions. Winking statues were rife. The house of the Virgin was declared to have been carried through the air by night, from Nazareth to Loretto, at the head of the Adriatic, and it has ever since been a most remunerative possession to its holders. "The ignorant masses," says a contemporary,[1] "worship the images of stone, or of wood, or marble, or brass, or painted on the walls of churches—not as statues or mere figures, but as if they were living, and trust more in them than in either Christ or the saints. Hence they offer them gold, silver, rings, and jewels of all kinds, and that the more may be wheedled into doing so, those who drive this trade hang medals from the neck or arms of the image, to sell, and gather the gifts they receive into heaps in conspicuous places, putting labels on them by which the names of the donors may be proclaimed. By all this a great part of the world is put past itself about these images, and led to make often distant pilgrimages, that they may visit some little figure and leave their gifts to it; and all piety, charity, and duty is neglected to do this, in the belief that they have given and repented enough if they have put gold into the bag at the shrine."

That the state of the Church should have been so appalling was, however, only the natural result of the character of many of its popes in this last century of its glory. Alexander V. died within ten months after his elevation, as it was generally believed, and as the indictment of the Council of Constance alleges, poisoned by his successor. That worthy, John XXIII., an ex-pirate, who owed his election to threatenings and bribes, was indicted and deposed at Constance for heresy, perjury, simony, adultery, incest, murder, and a long list of other crimes,[2] and could not pretend to deny that he was guilty, but assented

[1] Polydore Vergil born (?) 1475, died (?) 1555. [2] See page 62.

to the charges as just, "to his certain knowledge." No wonder that there have been no more Johns among the popes, after such a monster of wickedness. Yet, after this public conviction, with all his fresh and flagrant infamy upon him, his successor made him a bishop and a cardinal, appointed him Dean of the Sacred College, and gave him a place next himself in all public ceremonies. Martin IV., his successor, roused the indignation of Christendom by his shameless plunder of the Church to enrich his family, the Colonnas. Nicolas V., son of a medical teacher, in his pontificate from 1447 to 1455, for a time redeemed the honour of the Papacy by his personal uprightness, and his zealous patronage of the new learning which reached Italy from Greece. To him we owe the founding of the Vatican Library, for which he collected 5,000 manuscripts. But Calixtus III., his successor, a Spaniard, an old man of over eighty, introduced the terrible name of the Borgias on the roll of popes. What Rome and the Church endured under him may be judged from the fact that at his death, in 1458, after a reign of three years, his nephews and all the Spaniards of their suites fled from Rome, to escape punishment for endless murders, robberies, and tumults which they had committed along with the Colonnas—the family of Martin V. Paul II., a Venetian, who wore the tiara from 1464 to 1471, has been rightly called, with others, a precursor of the Reformation, from the necessity which his worldliness and unblushing immorality showed for a thorough reform, alike in the head and members of the Church. Sixtus IV., an Italian Franciscan friar, devoted himself, like Martin V. and Calixtus III., to raising his family from obscurity to princely rank. Impelled by this passion, he utterly forgot his own self-respect and all care for the Church; gave himself up to greed of money for himself and of worldly honour for his relations; shrinking from no deed of simony, or even of blood, to gain these ends. His intrigues and want of principle threw the Church into confusion and filled Italy with violence, till he drew on himself the hatred and contempt of his own age, and the

indignant abhorrence of posterity. Innocent VIII. left a family of sixteen children, and made the son of Lorenzo de Medici a cardinal, at thirteen years of age. But it was left to Alexander VI.—a Spanish Borgia—to make the Papacy almost more infamous than John XXIII. had made it. He became pope in 1492, by bribing a sufficient number of cardinals. While himself a cardinal, he had rivalled the late favourite of the present Pope, Antonelli, in his looseness, for he had a family of four sons and a daughter, whose mother was a married woman. His highest aim as pope was to raise these illegitimates to wealth and honour. Even his foreign policy, which disturbed the world, had no higher end than to make them princes by marriage or intrigue. His daughter Lucrezia was married four times by his diplomacy, and he readily divorced her from such of her successive husbands as were not murdered. Cæsar, his favourite son, murdered, among many others, his sister's third husband and his own brother Louis, throwing his corpse into the Tiber. But though he laughed at crime, his father made him a cardinal. Cæsar, however, preferred the liberty of a layman, and, resigning his ecclesiastical honours, joined his father and the Orsinis to exterminate the family of the Colonnas. But hardly had these been driven out, or removed by the dagger or the poison-bowl, before father and son turned against the Orsinis, and then against the Italian princes and Free States in detail. Wars were stirred up to revenge hesitation in marriage alliance with the Pope's family, and divorces granted on condition of invasions of Italy to conquer principalities for them.

Alexander's death was worthy of one who has been well called the Nero or Tiberius of the Papacy. Having invited Adrian, the richest of the cardinals, to dinner, with the intention of murdering him by poisoned confectionery, the cook, bribed to do so, set the treacherous cake before the Pope himself, who ate it and died. No man ever left a more infamous memory. Both the common people of Rome, whom he favoured, and the aristocracy, whom he proscribed, believed that he lived in infamous relations

with his daughter. Shameless plays were acted in his palace by public prostitutes. All Christendom repeated the epigram—"Alexander sells the keys, the altars, Christ Himself. He has a right to do so, for he bought them first." Yet it was this monster who burned Savonarola as a heretic, in 1498, for denouncing his wickedness, and founded the index expurgatorius to maintain the purity and orthodoxy of the press! Henry VIII. was a boy of twelve when Alexander died.

Such was the condition of the Church at large on the eve of the Reformation. But amidst all this imposture on the one hand, and unspeakable corruption even at the centre, it grew, outwardly, in England, ever richer and more stately. The abbots and bishops almost alone had ready money in these troubled times, and used it to buy up, at nominal prices, the lands depreciated by the civil wars. The destruction of the nobility, moreover, in these long and terrible struggles, helped them, for while the territorial aristocracy had well-nigh perished, that of the Church remained intact. It was indifferent which Rose won or lost: the Church throve in any case. The weaker the cause of a prince, the higher its claims, and the more of the high offices of State held by its members. Henry VII., when in exile, had proposed to the Pope to hold his crown in fealty to him, and the Pope, glad to find a pretender so pliant, blessed his attempt, and made himself his patron. When the crown passed into his hands, the glory of the Church seemed complete. His title to the throne, endorsed by the Pope, was read publicly in St. Paul's by the Primate, surrounded by a staff of bishops in their robes, who denounced the curses of the Church on anyone who should question Henry's claim. He reigned as the nominee of Rome: bound to it alike by superstition and gratitude.

CHAPTER VI.

THE EVE OF THE REFORMATION.

TO understand the reign of Henry VIII., in its connection with the Reformation, it is necessary to keep in mind the circumstances under which his father obtained the crown.

Henry VII. was born some months after the death of his father, Edmund Tudor, Earl of Richmond, and lived in exile, under attainder, or sentence of civil degradation and death, in Brittany, during the English civil wars. When Gloucester put aside, or murdered, the two young sons of his brother Edward IV., and seized the throne as Richard III., Henry was only twenty-six; but by the advice of Morton, Bishop of Ely, afterwards his chief counsellor,[1] he at once set out for England, to unseat the new king, his rival. Landing in Wales, as a Welshman he propitiated the Principality, and having obtained a footing and supporters, soon after won Bosworth Field, and with it the crown; the possession of which henceforth silenced any open question of his claims to it. But he held it by a precarious tenure, for he was a usurper. The Earl of Warwick and the De la Poles were nearer the throne than he; but the headsman's axe or flight removed this danger, and a marriage with Elizabeth of York united him, as the representative of the Lancasterians, with the great party of the White

[1] Archbishop of Canterbury and Lord Chancellor, 1486—1500.

Rose. Yet the four previous kings had all been violently dethroned: Henry VI. had been imprisoned and murdered; Edward IV. deposed, and for a time exiled; Edward V. was said to have been murdered, and Richard III. had been slain in battle. The civil wars, moreover, had left men's minds excited and ready for revolt, so that Henry's whole reign was either distracted by insurrections or by the fear of them, for Lambert Simnel claimed the throne in the second year of his reign, Perkin Warbeck terrified him till the fourteenth, and the Poles survived to keep even his son uneasy.

The character of Henry VIII. in its worst features was an inheritance from his father. Like him he was utterly heartless, and unspeakably mean; honoured the form of law, and trampled on its reality. No crime was allowed to stand in the way of either. To fill his coffers, and thus strengthen his position, the father, following Morton's counsels, exacted heavy fines for pretended offences from all who had money to pay them. The son beheaded the two foremost instruments of this villainy, but he kept the plunder they had accumulated. The father was ruthless in his severity against the party he had superseded: the son "never spared a woman in his lust, or a man in his anger." The father demanded subsidies for wars which he never began, to get hold of the money; the son made his Parliament cancel his debts, though his honour had been pledged to pay them. The father summoned Parliament only twice in the last thirteen years of his reign; the son summoned none from 1514 to 1523, and only one between 1523 and 1536. Having amassed treasure by force and fraud, both could do without an assembly they each hated. Dark, designing, treacherous, and ungrateful, Henry VII. sacrificed those who in early life had rendered him the most important services, and let no consideration of justice or mercy temper his selfishness or suspicion. Even his wife had her estate charged with any moneys he paid her, and he would ruin in the morning the host who had entertained him royally over night.

His son might differ from him in prodigally spending his treasure, but he was as unprincipled in acquiring it; he might be open in his crimes instead of secret and false, but the crimes were as little to one as to the other; nor could father and son have been more alike in thinking of their people and the country as only made to minister to their royal passions or caprices.

The slow but steady progress of the human mind in free thought, scientific effort, and social development, which had marked the fourteenth century, had steadily increased during the fifteenth, in spite of the religious and moral corruption that reigned so widely; perhaps, in part, as a reaction of the nobler spirits against it.

The University of St. Andrew's had been founded in 1411; the divinity school and library of Oxford in 1426, and the University of Aberdeen in 1494. Italy saw the glory of the Medicis rise and fade in this century at Florence. The three greatest Italian artists—Leonardo de Vinci, Michael Angelo Buonarotti, and Raffaele—adorned it, and it saw famous schools of art in other countries also.

Nor was progress confined to the old limits of civilization; the bounds of the known world were being steadily enlarged. The discovery of the Canary Islands in 1395, had quickened the desire for more distant voyages, and these, successively, added the Cape de Verd islands, the Azores, and the Guinea coast, to the maps of Africa before the middle of the century. The latter half was destined to witness more famous triumphs, for, before its close, Vasco de Gama had reached India by the Cape of Good Hope, and Columbus had revealed, beyond the Atlantic, a vast continent hitherto unknown.

All these refinements and discoveries, however, would have added little to the sum of real progress, but for another which for ever marks the fifteenth century as the most famous in modern history. Paper mills had been at work in Germany before it began, but the painful labour of the transcriber was

still the only means of multiplying books. At last, however, about 1430, Koster of Haarlem, gave the world the greatest gift ever conferred on it by man,—in the invention of printing from moveable types, and before the middle of the century, his first hint caught up by Gutenburg, Schœffer, and Faust, had spread sheets printed from metal types, like our own, to an extent that showed even then the greatness of their art. In its very infancy it proclaimed a new era for the human mind. In 1471, Caxton had set up the first printing press in England, and, three years later, the first book printed by it had been published. Day had risen on the earth at last.

During the reign of Henry VII. things were outwardly as prosperous for the Church as in the past. But it was only in appearance. The hideous corruption in all its parts had called forth the protests of some purer souls throughout Christendom. A Carmelite friar had come forward in Flanders, in the early part of the century, with great success, as a preacher of morality, but his severe sermons against the clergy were fatal to him, for, venturing to Rome in 1432, he was presently arrested, and soon after burned alive. "Those flames," says a contemporary, "were not those of a criminal, but, a martyr. Let who like clamour and rave against him, he lives in the highest heaven." The Cardinal Archbishop of Carniola, a Dominican, having been sent to Rome in the days of Sixtus IV. (1471—1484), was shocked to find things so different from his ideal, and in his honest simplicity ventured to speak to the Pope himself about the evil round him. But he only incurred insult and persecution, and at last died in prison at Basle in 1484, for having desired a new Council to bring about reform. Savonarola, (1452—1498) another prophet-like spirit, and also a Dominican, inveighed at Florence against the wickedness of the Church and of the Papacy, but he also soon fell a victim to Roman hatred, and was burned alive in 1498 by Alexander VI.! These and other pure-minded men hoped for a remedy from internal reform of the Church, but others, in the wide agitation of the

general mind, took a deeper view. A Carthusian monk of Erfurt, protested against the mass of superstitious opinions and customs which smothered religion; and the master of the Sorbonne in Paris in 1484, traced the evils of the time to the priestly despotism which had substituted external acts for living faith. In Germany, the influence of the Hussites in Bohemia led men to betake themselves to the Scriptures as the only true rule of faith. Fourteen editions of the Bible in High German were issued from the press as the first fruits of the new art of printing, before the Reformation, and three in Low German; while even in Paris, a French edition was issued before 1498, and in Italy, an Italian one had been published twenty years earlier. Nor was the activity of the press less in other directions, mainly religious and classical, for not fewer than ten thousand books and pamphlets made their appearance between 1470 and 1500.

As the greater number of the clergy could not preach at all, and the preaching friars entertained their hearers, for the most part, with wretched fables, to enrich their houses, or dealt in the pedantic follies of the later schoolmen, some better-minded men set themselves to introduce a higher and more earnest style into the pulpit. The kindling religiousness of the age was further helped by the publication of the Imitation of Christ, a tender embodiment of the monkish conception of religion, by Thomas of Kempen, a canon of Twoll, who died in 1471. John of Wessel, a Doctor of Divinity at Erfurt, assailed the errors on which the Papacy was built, and led men back to the Scriptures; but he died in prison in 1482, leaving John of Goch, prior of a convent of nuns at Mechlin, to help on the good work; while another, John Wessel, a university professor, spread abroad views which Luther afterwards recognized as identical with his own. Thus the necessity of a Reformation had become a fixed conviction over Christendom long before any of those whom we commonly call Reformers had appeared. Nor were opinions any longer circumscribed by local isolations. The

growth of commerce had already linked all Western Europe together, and ideas circulated no less freely than merchandise. The woollen goods of the east and west of England had already established a market over the Continent, and whole fleets of trading vessels passed and repassed between our harbours and those of Antwerp, Hamburg, and Dantzic, among other ports.

But a reformation in which religious zeal was left without intelligent guidance could have secured only imperfect results, and in the wisdom of Providence this want was being provided. The great Schoolmen had died out before the fifteenth century began, and the schools only repeated and maintained with ever-increasing emptiness what their founders had originally taught Their gloomy halls became more and more narrow-minded and ignorant. Knowledge, under them, had become, to use Milman's words, a stagnant morass or an impenetrable jungle. "What a sight it is," says Erasmus, "to see a theologian of eighty who knows nothing but empty sophisms, and can do nothing but dispute!" They busied themselves with a barren logic and empty and often irreverent trifling with imaginary problems, while utterly ignorant of the Scriptures or even the Fathers. Erasmus jests bitterly at the "theologasters" of his day, "than whose brains there is nothing more mouldy; than whose style nothing is more barbarous; while nothing is more stupid than their wits; or more thorny than their teaching; or harsher than their manners; or more hollow than their lives; or more virulent than their language, or blacker than their bosoms." All knowledge was claimed as a part of theology, and everything was decided by scholastic rules that had grown up in the dark ages. Whatever was new was suspected, and even the question whether the earth moved round the sun had to be settled by texts from Scripture interpreted by mediæval light.

The grand attempt to establish the theology of Rome on the basis of logic, and settle every possible question, however profound or preposterous, by formal syllogism and conclusion,

had long sunk to folly. The schools still discussed with unabated zeal whether God could have taken any form but that of man—as, for instance, that of a woman, of the devil, of an ass, of a cucumber, or of a flint stone. Then, supposing he had taken the form of a cucumber, how could He have preached, worked miracles, or been crucified? Whether Christ could be called a man while he was hanging on the cross. Whether the Pope shared both natures with Christ. Whether God the Father could in any case hate the Son. Whether the Pope was greater than Peter, and a thousand other niceties far more subtle than these, about "notions," "formalities," "quiddities," "ecceities," "instants," and "essences."

In such a deep prostration of intellectual life, the arrival in Italy of teachers of a new language and literature had all the charm of novelty, and was destined not only to revolutionize the state of letters in Europe, but carried in its distant results the emancipation of the mind from priestly authority in all its domains.

The fall of Constantinople, in 1453, extended the study of Greek in Italy still more widely, by sending westward a crowd of learned men, who taught in various parts of the Peninsula, and their love of their own ancient language and literature naturally awoke a patriotic feeling in favour of Roman antiquity also, in their Italian scholars. Princes took learning under their patronage, and the study of the writings of both Greece and Rome became the passion of the age.

As the century advanced, the enthusiasm deepened with the new life suddenly kindled through Europe by the wondrous increase of knowledge in other directions. Men talked of the strange world which Columbus had revealed beyond the Atlantic; of the voyage of Vasco de Gama to India; and, ere long, of Amerigo Vespucci's voyage to South America, and Cabot's discovery of Newfoundland and Labrador—the fancied "gold coast" of the west. The printing-press was more than half a century old when Henry VII. died, and the next generation was

to learn from Copernicus[1] the secret of the universe itself. The sleep of ages had been broken by a succession of marvels, which no age has ever seen equalled, and these acted and reacted to quicken intelligence in every direction.

The new learning early showed its bearing on the theology of the day. In Italy, indeed, under the shadow of the Papacy, it professed orthodoxy, for the most part, and confined itself to collecting and editing classical literature of all kinds. Under learned Popes like Nicholas V. and Pius II., and under Cosmo de Medici, among other temporal princes, Italy became the great school of Christendom, to which the Bristol merchants reported that multitudes of foreigners from all parts were constantly crowding to learn the language of antiquity, and to buy manuscripts of the classics, of which it had become the mart.

But if the revival of learning resulted, in Italy, mainly in servile devotion to philological studies, and to general scepticism, it yielded very different fruits in Germany. Its bearing on religious truth was recognized there from the first, nor did the insight into the corruptions of the Church thus obtained lead, as in Italy, to revulsion from Christianity. It was used to defend convictions and to help on the reformation demanded by the age. Reuchlin,[2] who introduced the study of Hebrew among Christians, did not scruple to vary in some cases from received translations, which itself was a blow at the Church authority, hitherto absolute. The want of Scriptural knowledge in his day drew forth his earnest regrets. But, beyond all others, the new learning found in Erasmus[3] one who was destined to make it a powerful aid to the inevitably approaching Reformation. His greatest work—the Greek New Testament—brings us back to England.

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[1] 1473—1543. His great work was published after his death. He saw a printed copy only a few hours before he died.

[2] 1455—1521

[3] 1467—1536.

Already, about 1450, Robert Fleming, afterwards Dean of Lincoln, had studied Greek and Latin in Italy, and had compiled a Lexicon of both on his return. Others soon followed his example, till, before the end of the century, they included such famous names as Grocyn, Linacre, Lillie, and Colet. Before their day the state of the Universities had been such that Italian scholars had to be hired to compose the public orations and letters. But when Erasmus met these scholars in Oxford, in 1498, he could write, "I have found so much polish and learning here that I hardly care about going to Italy at all. When I listen to my friend Colet, it seems like listening to Plato himself. Who does not wonder at the wide range of Grocyn's knowledge? What can be more searching, deep, and refined than the judgment of Linacre? When did nature mould a temper more gentle, endearing, and happy than that of Thomas More?" At Oxford, Erasmus advanced himself in Greek, slowly qualifying himself to prepare his Greek New Testament, which appeared at Basle in 1516—a work which directly and indirectly led to all the religious changes that followed.

As the French Revolution was largely due to the writings of the generation before it, the Reformation flowed from the principles of the first apostles of the New Learning, in England. The wide diffusion of the writings of Erasmus, which appeared with amazing rapidity, would have been striking in any age. His "Praise of Folly," which appeared in 1511, was circulated everywhere. Twenty thousand copies of his "Colloquies" were struck off at once,[1] and Turgo, Bishop of Breslau, could, at a later time, write him that "true theology, and the most sacred studies, almost ready to die—now, as if raised from the dead, flourish over the whole world, through your labours and guidance." No one ridiculed and condemned more bitterly the superstitions of the day—the indulgences, the worship of relics, the lying miracles, the monstrous legends, the idolatory of

[1] Milman's Essays, Erasmus, 118. The first edition of the Colloquies appeared in 1522.

saints and images which prevailed. No one scourged the friars and monks more fiercely, or was so bitterly hated by them. He mocked the scholastic theologians as men who affected to be able to define everything: who boasted of knowing questions on which St. Paul was ignorant; could talk of science as if they had been consulted when the world was made; could give the dimensions of heaven as if they had been there and had measured it with a plumb and line—claimants of universal knowledge, who, yet, had never read either the gospels or the epistles.

Monks were described as shut out of heaven in spite of their cowls and gowns, while waggoners and peasants were admitted; and even popes who, like those of that day, instead of "leaving all," as St. Peter did, tried to add to St. Peter's patrimony by war or craft, and turned law, religion, and all human things upside down in doing so, were ranked among the worshippers of folly. But he did more, he earnestly taught that "religion did not consist in ceremonies or in Jew-like outward acts, but in setting up Christ alone, as the one aim of our whole life, to which all studies, all efforts, all rest, and all business, should tend. He laughed at the current teaching respecting purgatory: commended to all ranks in the Church, from the pope downwards, if they would imitate Christ, to do so in poverty, in work, in teaching, in the cross, and in contempt of life. He ridiculed the vows to give so much to the saints on certain conditions, as simply heathen. His Greek New Testament, for its time, was a wonderful work. The boldness that questioned the authoritative Latin version and relied on the original text was startling. But his desire that all classes should have the Scriptures within their reach was still nobler. "I wish," said he, "that even all women might read the Gospels and the Epistles of St. Paul. I wish they were translated into all languages, so as to be read and understood not only by the Scotch and the Irish, but even by Saracens and Turks. I long for the day, when the husbandman shall sing parts of them to himself as he follows the plough, when the weaver shall hum them

to the time of the shuttle; when the traveller shall while away with their stories, the weariness of his journey." His famous Paraphrase of the New Testament opened the sense as well as the letter of the long banished, long sealed volume so simply, that a translation of it was afterwards ordered to be placed along with the English Bible in all our churches.

Colet,[1] Dean of St. Paul's, whom Erasmus brings before us as a man tall and elegant, of the sweetest manners and the utmost purity and simplicity of life, was no less truly a herald of the coming Reformation. To him also religion was a thing of the heart and life, not of forms or outward observances. Rejecting all but the historical and grammatical sense of the sacred text, he devoted himself to its exposition with intense enthusiasm. Like Erasmus, he despised the pious frauds and superstitions of his day and yearned to revive a purer faith and practice in the Church. "Never was reformation more necessary," cried he, in a Sermon to Convocation, "and never did the state of the Church need more earnest efforts." The vicious and depraved lives of the clergy, he declared, were the worst heresy with which the times were troubled. In St. Paul's school, which he founded, he introduced a new era in education. Lillie, an Oxford man, who had studied Greek at Rhodes, was made head master, and fresh school books were composed by Erasmus and Linacre for the use of the scholars, Colet himself writing a new Latin grammar, because no one else seemed able to write one easy enough "for little children learning a tongue all strange for them." The old studies which had become so trifling and worthless were ignored, and the aim concentrated on imparting a sound religious and classical education such as even at this day is all that could be wished in its principles. The spirit of the founder was, indeed, shown in the image of the Child Jesus carved over the master's chair, with the words beneath it, "Hear ye Him." Instead of the flogging and brutality which Erasmus

[1] 1466—1519.

tells us had been the characteristics of monkish education, Colet asked them to lift up their little white hands for him, in return for his prayers for them. So great was its influence in its own age that twenty new grammar schools on the same basis were founded in the short period before the Reformation.

The Grammar Schools of Edward VI. and of Elizabeth, and indeed the whole system of middle-class education which in another century had revolutionized the intellectual life of England, were, in fact, the direct result of Colet's School of St. Paul's.

The influence of the "Humanists"[1]—as these disciples of the New Learning were called—was of supreme value for the future of the Reformation. Like earlier Reformers in all great revolutions, they had no conception of the magnitude of inevitably impending changes, but while intending only to revive the old they prepared the way for the new. Erasmus, Colet, Linacre, Grocyn, and their fellows, belonged to the world that was passing away. Some of them were simply scholars: others busied themselves also with the universally agitated question of Church reform, but none wished to disturb the ancient doctrine or ecclesiastical system in anything fundamental.[2]

In the year 1500, Erasmus was a man of 33, Grocyn of 58, Colet of 36, Linacre of 40. Warham, the future Archbishop of Canterbury, was in his prime—a man of about 45, now Master of the Rolls: Wolsey, as yet only 29, had just got his first preferment as a country rector, at Lymington, in Somerset; Sir Thomas More was a young man of 20; Latimer, only a lad of 16, on his father's farm in Leicestershire; Cranmer, a boy of 11; Hooper, a child of 5; and Ridley, an infant. Those who were men when the century opened cast in their lot with the past; the younger became the apostles of the new era.

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[1] The "new learning" was called "the humanities," as, indeed, the same studies still are, in the Scotch universities, from its *humanizing* effect.

[2] Colet's attacks on the abuses of the Church Courts were especially fierce. See his "Romans," p. 162.

Besides Erasmus and Colet, their common friend More, was one of the unconscious forerunners of the impending change. He had left the family of Cardinal Morton, Archbishop of Canterbury, in 1497[1], and had gone to Oxford, where Erasmus found him the next year, and was charmed by his character. "Did Nature," he asks "ever frame a disposition more gentle, more sweet, more happy, than that of Thomas More." Morton had already said of him that "there was but one wit in England, and that was he." A few years later he was a London judge and practising lawyer, with an income of £4,000 or £5,000 a year, of our money, and after acting as ambassador on various special missions, and being Speaker of Parliament, he became Lord Chancellor in 1529, on the downfall of Wolsey. He was a vivacious, loveable man, of the brightest parts, and, what is more, of the largest views. His Utopia[2], a description of the island of "Nowhere," with its laws, institutions, &c., reveals the ideas which he must have diffused in his circle, and, thus, through the intellectual atmosphere of his day. Labour, in that happy region was fairly paid. The labouring classes were not as elsewhere, "doomed to a life so wretched that even a beast's life seemed enviable," but were regarded as the true basis of a well-ordered commonwealth, and the aim of legislation was to secure the social, industrial, intellectual, and religious welfare of the community at large. Nine hours' toil was the legal day's work. Schools were provided for all by the State. The houses were well built, and the streets broad, in contrast to those of England at that time. Theft, which our law for three hundred more years punished with death, was dealt with more mercifully, and the end of all penal legislation was the destruction of vice and the saving of men—a conception hardly realized even in our own day. Hope was inspired, to stimulate even the worst criminal to reform. In politics, More was, on many points, as original and

[1] There is a charming account of Morton's household in Utopia, but we cannot forget in reading it that this smooth ecclesiastic was the adviser of Henry VII.'s most shameless extortions. [2] Published in 1516.

as advanced. His views of the Pope's political power in England were more English than those of Henry before his divorce, for he vigorously opposed the undue concessions made to the papal claims in the king's book against Luther. In later years he went with him in imposing the premunire on the clergy, and he always held that the Church of England was the sister, not the vassal of Rome. Nor did he hesitate, in his early career in Parliament, to oppose Henry VII. in his demand for exorbitant subsidies, and at a later day he vindicated the privileges of the Commons in the face of Henry VIII. and Wolsey, by telling the latter, when he came to the House to demand money for the king, that he would give the answer when the cardinal had left.

In religion, his views were in theory even more before his age; for in "Nowhere" there was perfect toleration of all opinions, because the people were "persuaded that it is not in a man's power to believe what he pleases." Argument was freely allowed to all, though insult and violence to the religious convictions of any were illegal.

But though thus tolerant in theory, More was wanting in the moral courage to carry out his convictions, and the publication of Luther's attacks on the Church was hereafter to throw him into a frenzy. By a strange contradiction the gentle, amiable friend, and the tolerant philosopher, was to become the relentless persecutor. More's rise to the Lord Chancellorship after Wolsey's fall was the signal for the fires of Smithfield to be lighted once more. "He so hated this kind of men," says his son, "that he would be the sorest enemy they could have, if they would not repent,"[1] and he himself left it in the inscription to be put on his tomb, that he was "hard upon thieves, murderers, and heretics."[2] The translation of the New Testament by Tyndale made him ferocious and scurrilous, and no one took a more zealous part

[1] He himself says almost these very words in a letter to Erasmus. Erasmus' Letters B. 27, Letter 10.

[2] Furibus autem, et homicidis, hereticisque molestus.

in burning the obnoxious book.[1] Three persons guilty of circulating it were sentenced by him to ride with their faces to the horses' tails to the Standard in Cheap, New Testaments and other books they dispersed tacked thick on their cloaks, themselves to throw them there into a fire, and afterwards to pay a fine, in all, equal in our money, to £19,000.

Warham, Archbishop of Canterbury from 1504 to his death in 1532, was born of a good Hampshire family, about 1450 or 1455, and at Oxford had given himself specially to the study of Canon and Common Law so completely that he seems never to have held a parish. First, a lawyer to the Court of Arches, he was next head of the Law School at Oxford, whence he was sent, for his legal knowledge, on a mission, by Henry VII., to Burgundy, to secure the extradition of Perkin Warbeck, whom it suited Henry to denounce as an imposter. Advancement speedily followed. He was presently Master of the Rolls; then, from 1502 to 1515 Lord Chancellor; to which high office he added, first that of Bishop of London, and, in 1504, that of Archbishop of Canterbury. In 1508, he was, besides, Chancellor of the University of Oxford.

A man of simple and refined tastes, though, like More, stern against the Reformers when they went further than he approved,[2] he was an early and generous friend of the New Learning. "When close upon my fortieth year," wrote Erasmus, in one of the notes to his Greek Testament, "it was my good favour to be introduced to Archbishop Warham. Cheered by

[1] Strype's Memorials, i. 182.

[2] Strype's Annals, i. 183. Foxe, 4, 649, 702, 703, 705. The Rev. Dr. Littledale, a Ritualist who is not ashamed to speak of the Reformers as 'miscreants,' 'ruffians,' and 'a horde of licentious infidels,' &c., characterizes Foxe, with his usual coarseness, as "a matchless liar," and his book as "a magazine of lying bigotry." But Bishop Burnet, who was as careful and correct as this meek and lowly christian is reckless and foul-mouthed, says that he had compared the Acts and Monuments with the records, since destroyed, and had never been able to discover any errors or prevarications in them, but the utmost fidelity and correctness.

his voice and aided by his purse, my spirits rose within me. Warham gave me youth and strength to labour in the cause of learning. All the gifts which nature and my country had denied me, his generosity supplied in full." He had a deep conviction of the need of ecclesiastical reform, and urged it in public and private, but this liberality was soon changed to a timid conservatism. Belonging to the past, he could not read the signs of the times. No sooner had a revolt from Church authority shown itself, even faintly, than he put himself at the head of the bishops in opposition to all change, and though less cruel than some, showed bitter hostility to the new "heretics." Their most reasonable proposals found no hearing from him; he held the introduction of books by the Continental Reformers a crime worthy of death, and the translation of the New Testament was not to be borne. Fortunately for the Reformation his star had paled before that of Wolsey, whose assumption of precedence, and favour with the king led Warham at last to resign the Lord Chancellorship in 1515. He had been the first man both in Church and State for eleven years, and still had a great reputation, but was comparatively powerless to hinder reform when his measures would have had most effect; yet his spirit remained the same. In 1521, he urged Wolsey to a more vigorous persecution than the milder nature of the Cardinal would allow, and when the House of Commons, in 1529, made complaints against the clergy, he wrote a defence, in reply, upholding his order throughout, demanding the subordination of the civil to the canon law, and pressing for sharper dealings with the "heretics."

Thomas Wolsey, little knowing the future before him, entered on the new century, rejoicing in his first, humble promotion to a country rectory. He was the son of an Ipswich trader of fair standing, not a butcher, as has been said, and showed, long years after, that, amidst all his greatness, he still remembered his native town kindly, by founding a grammar school in it from the proceeds of dissolved monasteries. Like Warham, an Oxford man, he met Erasmus while at that university; but though he

once in his after splendour patronized the great scholar, he did it so badly as to make him an enemy. At fifteen he had been a Bachelor of Arts; at twenty, a parish priest; but he was thirty-eight before he had risen above the crowd. He had then, however, been on a royal mission to the Continent, was dean of Lincoln, and chaplain and almoner to the king.

The entrance thus obtained at court opened the way to all the future. No sooner had Henry VII. died, than Wolsey paid assiduous court to the heir apparent. With no troublesome principles to hinder his advancement, he assiduously trimmed his sails to catch most favour. His bright wit, ready song, and easy morals made him a favourite. Besides, he humoured the young king to the top of his bent in all his fancies and vices, being "ever most earnest and ready to advance his only will and pleasure, having no respect to the cause.[1]" Himself of immense capacity for business, and delighting in it, he took care to relieve Henry from all his duties, that he might have his own time for "appetite and desire." The result was that he soon became all powerful, and crowded aside every competitor for royal favour. His promotion was henceforward unexampled in rapidity. In 1509 he was Henry VIII.'s Chief Almoner; in 1510 Rector of Torrington, Provost of Windsor, and Registrar of the Garter; in 1511, Prebendary, and in 1512 Dean of York, Abbot of St. Albans, Dean of Hereford, and Precentor of St. Paul's; in 1513 he got the Bishopric of Tournay from the French king; in 1514 he was made Bishop of Lincoln, and, eight months after, Archbishop of York. In 1515 Leo X. made him Cardinal, and Henry raised him to be Lord Chancellor, Warham having resigned through his intrigues and affronts. In 1516 he became Papal Legate, and thus took precedence of Warham even in spiritual rank. In 1518 he added to all his other honours and emoluments, the Bishopric of Bath; in 1521 he was Ambassador to Charles V., and in 1529 he became

[1] Cavendish, Life of Wolsey, 17.

Bishop of Winchester. Nor was even this all, for he long held a number of bishoprics at once, as agent for their foreign non-resident owners, and drew large revenues from them as such.

That one man should have held so many offices at a time was only in accordance with immemorial custom. In Archbishop Langham's day (1366—1376) some of the clergy, mostly Italians, and many of them living at Rome, held as many as twenty benefices and dignities, by means of Papal "provisions," with a license to hold as many more as they could get.[1] It was by this shameful system the popes rewarded their officials and enriched themselves, for they received a percentage from each benefice. Colet in his youth had three livings and a prebend, though not even in deacon's orders.[2] Nor did it end with the Reformation. With some other abuses, left as a legacy from Papal times, it lasted, in a modified degree, till the beginning of the present reign; but now, thank God, the Church of England is free from it.

In Wolsey's time, ecclesiastical benefices were, in fact, the ordinary way of providing salaries for the high officials of the State, who were, as a rule, clergymen. Wolsey received his Abbacy of St. Albans to repay his previous expenditure on a mission to France. But his love of splendour, and determination to dazzle and awe all classes, led him to a grasping eagerness for money, abhorrent alike to uprightness and self-respect. He accepted from Louis XII. a bishopric in France, which he presently sold for 12,000 livres a year for life, and took a pension of 1,000 gold crowns a year as a bribe for his influence against Charles V. From Francis I. he took a sum of money in cash, with a yearly pension, and exacted a promise of support at Rome in his intrigues for the Papacy—in return for secret help with his master. But one side was not enough. He secretly received pay from both, though to serve one was to injure the

[1] Collier's Eccl. Hist., iii. 128, ed. 1852.

[2] Drummond's Erasmus, i. 70.

other. While taking money from the French king he was enjoying from Charles V., the deadly enemy of France, a pension of 3,000 livres a year, a Spanish bishopric worth 5,000 ducats a year, with a bond of 2,000 ducats a year on a second; and Charles found himself betrayed, after all, for having offered too little. He haggled for bribes with the Venetian ambassador.[1] "The business between Venice and England could not proceed till he received a hundred Damascene carpets." From the Pope he got the disposal of all the chief sees in England, receiving heavy sums at each vacancy. He "administered" others, as I have said, for Italian absentees, and drew a share of the revenues. He was paid heavily by France, or by Charles, for each fresh treaty or new departure in policy. Money he must have, for his state was kingly; he would have preferred it honestly, but he would get it dishonestly rather than want. The age allowed vails even to Prime Ministers, from subject and alien alike, and he never shut his hand against any. Giustiniani estimated his income, from a few sources, at 42,000 ducats a year, a sum equal in purchasing power to over two millions and a quarter of our money.

The consciousness of supreme ability may palliate his determination to be supreme, but it cannot justify the way he used his supremacy. Towards the nobility, perhaps to counterbalance his humble origin, he was arrogant and insulting to the last degree, and almost more so to the ambassadors in London. He opened the letters of the French Embassy; shook the Papal Nuncio, and rated him soundly; told the Venetian ambassador "his people were thieves," and gave him his hand to kiss. Even Shakspeare uses the phrase "This Ipswich fellow's insolence." His one aim in all his policy, from first to last, was to raise himself to the Papacy. He was thirty-nine or forty at Henry's accession, the young king himself being only a boy of eighteen; but instead of trying to guide him as a Churchman ought, he

[1] Giustiniani's Despatches, 2, 104.

encouraged him to every folly and vice, that the business of the country might fall into his own hands. His intrigues at home and abroad, to get higher and higher, were ceaseless and utterly immoral. "He never says what he means, but the reverse," writes the Venetian ambassador.[1]

Towards his master, Henry, he bore himself as a mere instrument to be used for any ends, however immoral. The tendency of the age was to exalt the Crown at the expense of the people, and Henry shared it to the full. He would not if possible be less a king than his rivals of France or Spain, whose will was absolute in their States, and Wolsey stooped to carry out this despotic policy. The destruction of the aristocracy by the civil wars had opened the way for it, and, though himself sprung from the people, and as a Churchman their natural defender against tyranny, he eagerly took advantage of the national helplessness to raise himself by raising the king. Deliberately setting himself to crush the ancient constitution of the country, he sought to hand over England to Henry as the plaything of his royal will; the Church alone, with Wolsey at its head, remaining free. To make himself great he betrayed the nation, and made its ruler a Turkish Sultan, with an absolute power over the property, the life, and—if Henry could have had it so—over even the thoughts of all. He hated Parliaments as a relic of freedom; browbeat them when summoned, and did without them as far as possible. He was willing to sacrifice England, and demoralize Henry into a tyrant, that he himself might keep on the top, as a step towards the tiara, under a master he had helped to make absolute; and he had all the vices of a slave who knows that his very existence hangs on that master's breath. The royal motto that governing means lying,[2] never had a more sincere disciple, for in his whole career he deceived every one by turns with whom he had relations, till, in the end, his duplicity towards Henry himself brought his ruin.

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[1] Despatches, 2, 57. [2] Régner c'est dissimuler. Louis XIV.

A man utterly regardless of truth and principle could not be expected to be moral. Burnet accuses him of being diseased by his vices;[1] and we at least know that he had a son and daughter. Nor was he ashamed to make the former a churchman, and heap no fewer than thirteen benefices on him, or to make the latter Abbess of Salisbury. He tried indeed to get his son made Bishop of Durham, the richest see in England, with the finest episcopal palace in London, but Henry would not allow it. It is only fair to say, however, that he grew moral when he had outlived the capacity and opportunity for vice.

Yet he was not without many good points. Though set against any thorough reform, he never bore himself cruelly to the Reformers, but made penance easy to them; and he never took any one's life for his opinions. His bearing and public character in some aspects, at the height of his glory, are vividly brought before us by the Venetian ambassador. "He is very handsome," says he, "learned, of vast ability, and indefatigable. He, alone, transacts the same business as occupies all the magistracies, offices, and councils of Venice, both civil and criminal. All State affairs, likewise, are managed by him, let their nature be what it may."

"He is pensive, and has the reputation of being extremely just (as Lord Chancellor). He favours the people exceedingly, especially the poor, hearing their suits, and seeking to despatch them instantly. He also makes lawyers plead gratis for all paupers. He is in very great repute; seven times more than if he were Pope."

Left to gamble, to indulge in empty magnificence, and play the profligate to his will, the young king was virtually, for years, in the hands of the astute ecclesiastic; but as youth passed, and the strong will, become brutal in its self-assertion by Wolsey's long gratification of its every whim, turned towards matters of

[1] Burnet's Reformation, Abridged by Author, 5, 6.

State, the fate of the splendid favourite hung daily on a finer thread. He had succeeded in rousing against himself the hatred of every class except the poorest, and, at last, his duplicity ruined him with his master when a secret letter he had sent to the Pope was discovered. He had infuriated the people by demanding forced loans and free gifts for the king, and by issuing illegal commissions to levy oppressive taxes illegally, to be spent on the king's reckless caprices—infuriated them so much, indeed, that rebellion was averted only by Henry abandoning the scheme. The House of Commons hated him for trying to overawe them into granting taxes without discussion: the nobility hated him for his origin, and for the pride which made him the first ecclesiastic that ever wore silks; who maintained a state like that of a great king; who used the ceremonies in worship which were reserved to popes alone; who made bishops and abbots serve him in his household, and dukes and earls give him the water and towel to wash. The clergy abhorred him for taxing them to get money for the king; for his grasping so many dignities, and, above all, for his getting a Bull empowering him to visit all monasteries, and all the clergy, and to dispense with all the laws of the Church in reference to them, for a year, while he reformed them.

For, withal, he was too astute not to see that reform was needed, but his only idea was to sew a new patch on the rent of the old garment. He would spread education, and for this he founded Cardinal College, now Christ Church, at Oxford, from the spoil of suppressed monasteries. He would reform the morals of the clergy, though his own were so wretched; restrict pluralities and non-residence, while himself the grossest offender; keep out foreign heretical influences, and suppress as gently as might be, heresy at home, and found new bishoprics[1] to conciliate the Church. He aimed, indeed, at playing the Reformer on this scale for Christendom, and hoped to have

[1] J. H. Blunt's Reformation, 90.

the opportunity of doing so, by intriguing through half a life, for the Papacy.

He clung to this dream, indeed, to the end; for his last great idea seems to have been to join France and England in an alliance to dictate reforms, through himself, to the whole Church; but their value could have been little in a political aspect, since he claimed the absolute immunity of the clergy from trial by secular courts, even for criminal offences, and little good could have come to practical religion from one whose whole life showed that he did not know what it meant.

CHAPTER VII.

THE HOUR BEFORE DAWN.

AT the accession of Henry VIII. our language was spoken in no other country. Spain was the greatest European power, and France, which was nearly her equal, of course claimed to be her superior. The Holy Roman Empire was the first State in rank, and when united with the Spanish crown, under Charles V., it made him apparently the dictator of Europe. The Turk was a terrible foe, ever threatening Christendom. He had held Constantinople for fifty-six years—had conquered Greece, threatened Hungary, and sacked Otranto, at the heel of Italy, everywhere showing himself the same ruthless barbarian as he is to-day. Prussia was still a desert of sands and marshes. Holland was ground under the feet of Spain. Venice was rich enough to tempt campaigns to plunder her. Italy was the battle-ground of France and Spain. The gigantic spectre of the Pope cast his shadow, like Death, over all lands. England had little weight in Europe. Her civil wars had for the time paralyzed her, and her very smallness told against her, so that men spoke of her as important only when allied to France or Spain, or to the German princes. Her population was only about four millions, and of these, all the Welsh spoke Welsh, and the Cornish spoke Cornish. The great towns and cities of our day were mostly insignificant or unknown. Trade was limited to a few centres, and travelling

through the country was as difficult as it is now in the backwoods of Canada. Thrice as many men spoke French as spoke English, five times as many spoke German, and seven times as many spoke Spanish.

Henry's accession, in 1509, filled England with joy. For the first time since Richard II. it had a king with an indisputable title, and thus needed no longer fear civil war. The personal qualities of the young king, moreover, won all hearts, for, though only eighteen, he was a pattern of manly beauty; famous in all athletic sports; noble in his bearing; bright and intelligent; courteous to all, and accomplished beyond most of his age in any rank. In theology—unfortunately, as it proved—he took great delight, and he was so good a musician that some of his compositions survive even to this day.

Six years after his accession—in 1515—and again, in 1519, when he was twenty-eight, we have notices of him from the Venetian ambassador. "He is not only very expert in arms, but gifted with mental accomplishments of every sort. He speaks English, French, Spanish, and Latin; understands Italian well; plays on almost every instrument; sings and composes fairly; is prudent and sage, and, besides, is so good a friend to the State that we consider it certain no Italian sovereign ever surpassed him in this respect."[1] "He is extremely handsome. Nature could not have done more for him; he is very fair and admirably proportioned. He hears three masses a day when he hunts, and sometimes five on other days. In hunting he tires eight or ten horses in succession. He is very fond of tennis, at which game it is the prettiest thing in the world to see him play, his fair skin glowing through a shirt of the finest texture." Pasqualigo describes him as "the very handsomest potentate I ever set eyes upon; above the usual height, with an extremely fine calf to his leg, his complexion very fair and bright, with auburn hair, combed straight and short, and a

[1] Giustiniani, i. 76.

round face so very beautiful that it would become a pretty woman. He draws the bow with greater strength than any man in England, and jousts marvellously."[1]

Such was the man whom Wolsey, at more than double his age, had in his hands, to make or mar. Under honest and upright guidance he might have become an ideal king: under that of the future Cardinal he became a Turkish Sultan, insatiably vain; prodigally ostentatious and spendthrift; and so fiercely tyrannical that neither law, morality, nor pity could for a moment restrain him. But the tiger lay asleep in his earlier nature, and might perhaps never have shown itself had he been less carefully corrupted. Yet by 1520, when he was not yet thirty, he had learned thoroughly to play the despot; and could conceal his hatreds perfectly till the moment arrived to show them. Eighteen months after the Duke of Buckingham, hated as a descendant of Edward III., had given him an imaginary offence, he had him arrested, and sent before the Lords for conviction; and on the House of Commons hesitating to pass the necessary Bill of Attainder till they had what they deemed sufficient evidence, sent for Montague, a leading member, and addressed him—"Ho! man, so they will not suffer my Bill to pass, will they not? Get it passed by to-morrow, or else this head of yours will be off." It did pass, and Buckingham was judicially murdered. Henry was then only thirty. No wonder that More, even when Henry kept him always near him, and walked in the garden at Chelsea with his arm round his neck, told his son-in-law not to count much on that, for if his head would win him a castle in France, were there war, it should not fail to go.

Wolsey had, in fact, only too thoroughly succeeded in developing all that was worst in his character. His father had left him £1,800,000, a sum equal then to twelve times as much now; but it was all squandered in three years. In 1519,

[1] Giustiniani, i. 86 (1515). Henry's age, 24.

Guistiniani tells us that "Henry's incessant gambling had made him of late lose a treasure of gold. He loses, at times, from six to eight thousand golden ducats a day"—that is, from about thirty-six to about forty-eight thousand pounds. His hideous self-worship, fanned for selfish ends by Wolsey, had, in truth, early grown to look on England as existing simply for his gratification, and on the nation as holding even their lives only at his will. It is all important in estimating the men around him, or the Parliaments of his reign, to remember that they lived under such an Oriental despotism.

The condition of the people in Henry's day was far from what some have painted it. The sons of gentlemen were as yet thought to degrade themselves by education, which was only fit for the sons of peasants.[1] Indeed, even in Edward VI.'s reign, an Act was passed to secure benefit of clergy to such noblemen as could neither read nor write. The low tone of public morality which had made it possible for Henry VII. to oppress and plunder his subjects under forms of law, was growing worse and worse, though his son, to signalize his accession, put to death the agents his father had employed thus infamously, while retaining the plunder they had extorted. Bribery and corruption reigned largely in the jury-box and on the bench.[2] Truth between man and man was so little regarded that Henry twice cancelled his debts, though promised, under the great seal, to be duly paid. In fact, society was rotten to the very core, from the king to the beggar.[3] The immorality of the Church had gradually brought that of the laity to its level.

The position of the poor was especially wretched. The same causes that had created so much pauperism in the former century were still active. "When a master died or became too poor, or when servants fell ill, they were forthwith thrust out of doors," says Sir Thomas More, "either to starve for hunger or

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[1] Furnivall's Babee's Book, xiii. [2] Latimer's Sermons, pass.
[3] See Art. in *Westminster Rev.* vol. 30, p. 27.

manfully to play the rogue." One-third of the population was unprofitable to the State. England had once been the wealthiest part of Christendom, but it now had more beggars than any other country. Rents had risen to three times their old rates, and food and clothing were much dearer. Landlords had no longer any feudal tenderness to their tenants, but constantly evicted them from the small holdings which had hitherto been the rule, and absorbed these in large sheep-farms, leaving the households thus cast off to wander into the world as beggars. Dismissed from estates, selfish laws shut them out from entering towns or earning a living in any handicraft. The crowds of soldiers discharged from the wars, of retainers set adrift by the policy enforced against their masters by Henry VII., swelled the number of paupers. The poverty in London was appalling. Henry and Wolsey, and a few more, here and there, might revel in indulgence, but huge classes of the nation were unspeakably wretched.

In the first years of Henry's reign the demand for ecclesiastical reform was still raised from within the Church itself; nor was there, as yet, any thought in its most liberal members of seceding from it. The friends of the New Learning proposed only the correction of confessed abuses by the Church authorities themselves. Appointed in 1511 to preach at St. Paul's, before the Convocation of Canterbury, Dean Colet fearlessly denounced the sins of his brethren. They were told that they "set by procurers and finders of lusts;" that they were blind to all that did not bring them gain; that they thought only on fat benefices and high promotions; on tithes and rents; that they clutched at any number of livings, and sought pensions on others resigned. "To be short," said he, "all the corruptness, all the decay of the Church, all the offences of the world, come of the covetousness of priests." Both priests and bishops were busied, besides, he went on to say, in continual secular occupations, to the dishonour of the priesthood and the confounding it with the laity. Reformation, he cried, must begin with the

bishops. New laws were not wanted, but enforcement of those already existing. They should not ordain men without proper inquiry; should set their faces against nepotism, against simony, against non-residence, against the clergy being merchants, hunters, usurers, wearing arms, being common players, haunting taverns, or associating questionably with women. The monks, also, were to be purged of similar faults. The bishops themselves were not, moreover, continued the faithful preacher, to overlook their own errors. Some of them were worldly; others non-resident and negligent of their duties; others spent the money of the Church on mere grandeur. The episcopal courts needed reform, and provincial councils should be held; and when the clergy were reformed, the reformation of the laity would follow.[1] Such a man, pure and simple in his own life, brave and earnest in his convictions, and preaching as if "inspired,—raised in voice, eye, his whole countenance and bearing, out of himself," might have roused the Church if anyone could have done so, but the malady was too deep to be cured by words.

Such a sermon, the first trumpet blast of the coming Reformation, was furiously resented, and brought Colet into no little danger of a capital charge, for it was not his first or gravest offence. He had not only founded and endowed St. Paul's School, for the free education of 153 children in the New Learning, but had dared to translate the Lord's Prayer into English, with comments for popular use. At Oxford he had scandalized the clergy by discarding all conventional rules in his lectures on the Epistles of St. Paul, and going directly to the sacred text itself as the supreme authority, instead of repeating traditional interpretations. At St. Paul's he had begun regular preaching, and was lecturing steadily through the Gospels, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer, and had created such an excitement that vast crowds came from many miles to hear him. His

[1] See the Sermon, in Knighton's Life of Colet.

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doctrinal innovations were no less offensive than his boldness of speech, for "he condemned" images, auricular confession, and purgatory, no less freely than he censured the shortcomings of his brethren. Fitz James, Bishop of London, a fierce and ignorant bigot, forthwith, therefore, accused him to Warham, the archbishop, as a heretic, but the personal friendship of the primate and their common friendship with Erasmus saved him. Henry himself, indeed, stood by him, as well as Warham. "Let every man have his own doctor," said the young king, after a long interview; "but this man is the doctor for me." Yet, both Tyndale and Latimer, years after, spoke of the peril of burning in which he had been.

The interests and the ignorance of the clergy made it hopeless, however, that any Reformation should begin with them as a body. All such movements, indeed, invariably rise in the laity. The dead conservatism of a religious corporation, fostered by prejudice and self-interest, is extolled as orthodoxy, and change of any kind branded with evil names. Hence, though the New Learning might here and there have a few timid patrons, like Warham, among the dignitaries of the Church, it encountered the deadliest resistance over Christendom from ecclesiastics of every kind as a class. In Germany, Reuchlin, in 1513, was involved in a fierce dispute with the Dominican Grand Inquisitor, who demanded that everything in Hebrew should be burnt. "They call Grecians heretics," says the great scholar; "denounce the New Learning as contrary to the Roman faith, and call for our being handed over to the magistrates." Erasmus had a similar experience in the opposition to his Greek New Testament published in 1516. At Antwerp a preacher publicly lamented that theology and sacred learning were no more; that men had risen who were tinkering the Holy Gospels and even the Lord's Prayer; "as if," says Erasmus, "I were altering Matthew or Luke, and not rather they, by whose ignorance and neglect what these have written has been corrupted."

Everywhere the cry rose that "the Church was in danger," that religion was to be changed, and that those who took to Latin or Greek were "heretics" and "Antichrist." Even Erasmus's edition of Jerome had to run the gauntlet of a fierce opposition. "Grave men, who were great theologians in their own eyes, cried out by all that was sacred not to let any Greek or Hebrew be in the text; that there was danger in these studies, and that they were good for nothing but to tickle idle curiosity."[1] Tyndale, the martyr, could remember how the obscurantist disciples of the Schoolmen "raged in every pulpit against Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, and how the teachers of classical Latin suffered at their hands; how some preachers beat the pulpits with their fists for madness, and roared with open mouth that, if they had a Terence or a Virgil, they would burn it in the fire, and how all good learning had decayed and was clean lost since Latin began to be studied."[2]

Julius II., the Pope at the accession of Henry, in 1509, was in many ways a representative of the age. His reign from 1503 to 1513 was that of a fierce soldier rather than of an ecclesiastic, for he spent his pontificate in constant wars, himself clad in full armour, leading on hired soldiery to the battlefield and the storming breach. Erasmus, who saw his triumphal entry into Bologna in 1506, never forgot the sight of the High Priest of Christendom celebrating a triumph over his fellow-countrymen with the pomp of a heathen conqueror, and spoke of him, even after many years, as the "Impious Julius." Such a life had to leave the bottomless gulf of Church abuses untouched, and shocked Europe hardly less than the crimes of Alexander VI.

In such times pope and priest alike were on their good behaviour more than even their enemies could have dreamed. Eyes were upon them which, in after years, might make or mar

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[1] These quotations are from the texts in Gieseler, v. 196, 197.

[2] Answer to Sir Thomas More. Works, iii. 75.

them. In 1510, under this ambitious and warlike pope, Luther was in Rome; sent thither on a deputation from his monastery at Erfurt. "On arriving," says he, "I fell on my knees, raised my hands to heaven, and exclaimed, 'Hail, holy Rome! made holy by the holy martyrs, and by the blood that has been spilt here.'" In his fervour, he adds, he hastened to view the sacred places, saw all, believed all. But he soon perceived that he was the only person who did believe. Christianity seemed totally forgotten in this centre of the Christian world. The Pope spoke only of blood and war. Those around him were politicians, diplomatists, or men of letters, who would not open their Bibles for fear of hurting the purity of their classical Latin. In the churches things were as bad. The priests gabbled the service so quickly that they were done with it before he had got through the "Gospel."[1] "I have heard them make a boast of their free thinking," says he. "Repeatedly, in consecrating the host, they would say, 'Bread thou art, and bread thou wilt remain. Wine thou art, and wine thou wilt remain!'" In a fortnight the horrified German had left Rome.[2]

John, son of Lorenzo de Medici, crowned as Leo X.—the successor of Julius—reflected in a light of his own the spirit of the age. Born at Florence in 1475, he was made a deacon at seven, an abbot at eight, and a cardinal at sixteen! In 1513, at the age of thirty-eight, he became, within five days, priest, bishop, and pope. Personally an accomplished scholar, and a patron of art and learning, as became one of the Medici, he immortalized himself by completing the vast work of building St. Peter's at Rome, which his predecessor had begun. Kindly and generous, fond of magnificence, and proud beyond measure, in religion he was a mere heathen, if anything. His summers were spent in the country, in hunting, shooting, and fishing, varied by the pleasures of literary society. In winter

[1] Like some of the Ritualists, now. [2] Michelet's Luther, 16.

he returned to Rome, to hold a brilliant court. No expense was too great to be lavished on festivities spiritual or temporal—on amusements and theatres, on presents and marks of favour.[1] Cardinal Bibbiena wrote, "The only thing we want is a court with ladies." Ariosto was in his glory; Macchiavelli had dedicated his writings to Leo, and Raffaele was peopling the walls of the Vatican for him with more than human forms. Cardinals wrote tragedies and comedies not wanting in talent, but sadly deficient in decency. It was the fashion to call in question the very principles of Christianity. Erasmus declares himself astonished at the blasphemies that met his ears. Leo had an exquisite taste, was passionately fond of music, and, while he filled his rooms with antique statues, devoted his spare moments to heathen authors. The morals of a court so voluptuous were those of the day, though the pope himself at least respected outward decency. Pagan Rome, with its luxury and its irreligion, had risen again from the grave.

Strangely enough, it was, indirectly, Leo's splendour that brought about the Reformation. Julius II. had founded St. Peter's, and Leo determined to finish it, but the expense, added to that of his luxurious court, was so enormous, that every possible means of raising funds was acceptable.

The Sale of Indulgences had for centuries been an important item in the huge profits of Rome. It was given out that the infinite merits of Christ, and the excess of the good works of the saints, beyond those needed for their own salvation, formed an inexhaustible treasury from which the Church might draw for the benefit of anyone, on special conditions. By satisfying these, not only the penance attached to particular sins and crimes by the Church, but also the pains of purgatory, which awaited the transgressor after death, might be escaped. The conditions first imposed when the system was fully developed

[2] Ranke's History of the Popes of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries, i. 53.

in the eleventh century, by Urban II., were the going on crusade to recover the Holy Land from the infidel; but erelong it was sufficient to hire a soldier for that purpose, and, still later, anyone who gave enough money for any purpose specified by a pope, was accepted.

In what were called the Jubilee years, this lucrative invention had been carried to amazing lengths. In 1300, all who came to Rome, and spent at least fifteen days there, of course at a large outlay, were promised the fullest forgiveness of their sins; and so well had this plan filled the ever gaping treasure chests of the Roman Court, that such jubilees were, at last, repeated every twenty-fifth year. In 1400, Boniface even hit upon the device of supplementary Jubilee years, during which sellers of indulgences were sent through Christendom, offering the forgiveness of sins at anyone's door for the amount it would have cost to have made the Jubilee visit to Rome. Paul II., in his reign, from 1464 to 1471, even granted indulgences to the Churches of different countries, to sell to whom they liked, but only on condition of the bulk of the receipts being duly remitted to Rome.

Julius II. had offered this easy way of escaping Church censure here and purgatory hereafter, to all who contributed towards building St. Peter's Church, at Rome; and Leo, in 1517, wishing to finish the magnificent structure, continued, and even extended the traffic, under pretence of wanting funds for a crusade against the Turk. Huckstering monks were, as of old, the brokers of these wretched wares, which they cried and cheapened in every part of Christendom. The right to sell them in Germany was bought for a large sum by the Archbishop of Magdeburg, who forthwith sent monks to hawk them through all the German States. An attempt to introduce them into England, in 1489, had produced only £49 in six months; and another, made now, failed, on Henry's demanding from a third to a half of the proceeds of the sales; but in Germany the traffic was equally shameless and profitable.

One Tetzel, a Dominican friar, of loose morals, but energetic and noisy, had been appointed the chief salesman of them in Saxony. His form of indulgence was complete enough to satisfy any who believed in it, for it absolved the buyer "first, from all ecclesiastical censures, however incurred," and then from "all sins, transgressions, and excesses, how enormous soever they may have been;" remitted all punishment in purgatory on their account, and restored the possessor to "the innocence and purity he possessed at baptism, so that when he died, the gates of punishment would be shut, and those of Paradise opened," and this however long he might live after buying the indulgence. There were, however, exceptions, one of which, at least, seems strangely out of place. To have plotted against the pope, or killed a bishop or other church dignitary, or even to have laid hands on one violently, or to have forged letters apostolic, were crimes beyond forgiveness. But so, also, was the exportation of arms and other prohibited goods to heathen parts, or the importing *alum* from heathen to Christian parts, contrary to the Apostolic prohibition, by which the faithful who wanted alum were required to use none but that obtained from the mines belonging to the Pope, at Tolfa, in the Pontifical States![1]

The extravagance of the language used by Tetzel and his subordinates, contrasted with their disgraceful lives, roused general indignation. They squandered in drunkenness, gambling, and impurity, much of the money got from the people. Though so immoral, they cried up their wares in language incredibly audacious. "Anyone," they said, "who bought an indulgence might rest secure that he was saved. The souls in purgatory, as soon as the money for an indulgence tinkled in the chest, escaped from the place of torment and flew up to heaven. Even the most awful sins would be remitted and expiated by them." The cross erected where the wares were sold, was declared to be as efficacious as that of Christ Himself. "Lo," cried Tetzel,

[1] See copy of Tetzel's Indulgence, in British Museum.

"the heavens are open: if you do not enter now, when will you? For twelve pence you may redeem the soul of your father out of purgatory; and are you so ungrateful as not to do it?"[1]

Such shameless audacity led, erelong, to results the most momentous. On the 31st October, 1517, Luther, then a university professor, raised the standard of revolt by nailing to the door of the Church of All Saints, at Wittenberg, a stout-hearted challenge of the whole doctrine of indulgences. The moral heroism that could thus stand up alone, for conscience' sake, against the world, is one of the grandest incidents in history. A poor and solitary monk, he braved a power which men held in awestruck reverence as the voice of God on earth. To question its being so was to break the spell of priestcraft that for ages had oppressed mankind.

Three years passed in vain attempts to tread out the spark of rebellion thus kindled, and papal anathemas were finally launched against one who had thus refused to pay the blind obedience Rome demanded. But the whole German nation was now intensely excited. At Erfurt, the students took the Bull from the booksellers' shops, tore it in pieces, and threw it into the river, in contempt. At Wittenberg, Luther publicly burnt it at the gates of the town,[2] amidst the shouts of the people. Till then, for many centuries, men had been raising the Pope to a God. One of the triumphal arches at the entrance of the monster Alexander VI., as Pope, to the old St. Peter's, had declared—"Rome was great under Cæsar, but now she is greatest. Alexander VI. reigns. Cæsar was a man. Alexander is a god." Kings and emperors had humbled themselves before Rome. Even to think otherwise than she commanded, had, for ages, been reputed blasphemy. But the smoke of the burning parchment at the gates of Wittenberg was an assertion of the absolute right of every man to his own private judgment in the sphere of conscience. It made a simple monk the critic of the Holy Chair. The "Authority of the

[1] Robertson's Charles V., l. 14.

[2] Dec. 10, 1520.

Church" had enslaved the human soul: that authority was exploded for evermore. From Wittenberg the news passed to England, as to other lands, and carried thither, as through Germany, the knell of priestcraft.

The fierce cruelty of the English bishops in the reigns of Henry IV. and Henry V., had, for the time, apparently extirpated "heresy"—that is, the crime of thinking in any measure for oneself in matters of religion. But like the bush in Horeb, the truth bore the flames without being consumed. Even in the year of Henry V.'s death, a priest was burnt for saying that to pray to a creature was idolatry, and that "we should pray to God alone." More than a hundred and twenty Reformers are mentioned by name as having been arrested, imprisoned, burnt, or forced to abjure, in the diocese of Norwich alone, between 1428 and 1431. Some of these martyrs were charged with one opinion, some with another, but none with any not held now by every evangelical Protestant. That men should not worship images, that they should seek pardon from God only, were the chief heresies laid against them; or, they had Wycliffe's Testament, or used the Creed and the Lord's Prayer in English!

Still, the hated fire of God's truth smouldered, and could not be put out. In 1457, it had even infected a bishop—Pecock of Chichester[1]—for he had preached openly, at Paul's Cross, that a Christian bishop should, above all things, preach the word of God, and that Scripture is only to be taken in its proper sense. For this he was deprived of his bishopric, and left to die in prison.[2]

Fourteen years passed, so far as we know, before another martyr suffered. The dreadful civil wars left no leisure for Lollard hunting. But, in 1473, another victim bore the fire on Tower Hill, for being a Protestant; and twenty-one years later,

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[1] 1422.

[2] Pecock's book, "The Repressor," is full of information respecting the Lollards, whom he mentions by that name.

in 1494, in the reign of Henry VII., under Cardinal Morton, Archbishop of Canterbury, in whose household Sir Thomas More spent his youth, and whom he so warmly praises, the first woman was burnt alive in England.

The agitation for Church reform throughout Christendom by the apostles of the New Learning, and the excitement of men at large, had roused the Church in England, as elsewhere, to the fierce bloodthirstiness of panic and rage. Warham was now Archbishop of Canterbury,[1] a man of amiable private character, a friend of Erasmus, but bent on keeping all religious thought strictly within Church limits. Before 1509, the year of Henry VIII.'s accession, Buckinghamshire alone saw six men burnt alive, a larger number branded with red hot irons on the cheek, and still others forced to carry faggots and do penance, as Reformers.[2] He only who hears the cry of martyred saints from below the altar knows the sufferings of these sad days.

It had gradually become difficult for any thoughtful person to escape at least the suspicion of heresy. Pilgrimages to miracle-working shrines, relics, worship of saints and images, indulgences, and every other religious abuse, were alike to be accepted without question.

Transubstantiation had become the central doctrine of the Church. The immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary, which had been fiercely disputed between the Franciscans and Dominicans, was in favour; the churches were crowded with images; saints' days, when no work was done, had become a public calamity by their number; the people, sunk in almost heathen superstition, expected salvation from mere external observances and due payments of money to the priest.

The Church felt and almost exaggerated its danger. Archbishop Warham—Fitzjames, Bishop of London, and Longland, Bishop of Lincoln, especially showed their zeal and alarm by a fierce search for heretics, and severe treatment of them when

[1] 1503—1532. [2] Foxe, iv. 124.

brought before them. Even such as recanted had to wear on their breast, for life, the figure of a blazing faggot, which shut every door against them, as persons proscribed by the Church, and saved from burning only by its mercy. The Lollards' Tower was filled with the suspected. Burnings became frequent. Foxe saw in the registries of Canterbury and London, between 1509 and 1517, the year of Tetzel's indulgences, long lists of persons compelled to abjure and wear the awful faggot-badge for life, and of seven men and two women burned alive. It stirs one's blood to hear for what these English men and English women had to pass through the fire or endure nameless indignities and sufferings. They were charged with holding one or other of such views as these: that the sacrament of the Altar is not the body of Christ, but actual bread; that baptism and confirmation are not *necessary* to salvation; that "confession" is unscriptural; that a priest has no more power with God than a layman; or with repudiating pilgrimages, image worship, prayers to saints, or some other Romish belief or practice.[1] The spectacle around them was indeed enough to make men revolt from the whole Church system in force, and the news from abroad, brought to London or Bristol, then the two great ports of England, must have strengthened them in their abhorrence of it. One fact alone—only whispered in those years from mouth to mouth, when a Spaniard was Queen, and Henry was in league with the Spanish king,[2] her nephew, to defend the Pope against France—would curdle English blood and make many a man a Lollard. It was this: that in Queen Catherine's country, in the fifty years before 1517, the Inquisition had burned alive thirteen thousand men, women, and children, and had racked, tortured, and thrown into fearful dungeons a hundred and seventy thousand more.[3]

An incident which created an immense sensation had, more-

[1] See their examinations, given at length in Foxe, vol. iv.
[2] In 1516, when Charles was sixteen. [3] Llorente, iv. 252.

over, happened in London in 1514. An infant of one Richard Hunne, a merchant tailor, having died in the parish of Whitechapel, where it had been put out to nurse, the priest of that parish and the priest of his own both demanded a "mortuary fee." This was the name for an odious claim on the part of the clergy for the second best horse or other animal belonging to a dead person, if he had been rich, or the clothes he had last worn if he had been poor. In the case of an infant, the demand made was for "the bearing sheet;" and as two were asked in the present instance, one was justly refused.

The priest, however, would not be baulked, and sued Hunne in the Legate's Court. But he was checkmated by a counter action being raised against him for appealing to a foreign court —an offence which made him liable to the terrible penalties of a premunire.[1]

There was, in fact, an intense bitterness between the Londoners and the clergy. The old Lollard feeling was still strong in the citizens, and it was deepened by the clerical greed for fees and their constant harassing suits for them in the ecclesiastical courts. What these courts had become we know on Dean Colet's authority. He denounces the Church lawyers as "torturers and tormentors of men." "All they heed," says he, "is where they may punish with the law's scourges and wound with its knife, so as to drain the golden blood of the laity. This they so eagerly thirst for that one might suppose they held their title and profession for no other purpose than, like bloodsuckers, to render men bloodless and penniless by never-ending pecuniary fines; themselves, meanwhile, all swollen with thefts and robberies. Atrocious race of men! deadliest plague to the Church of Christ! very devils transformed into angels of light!"[2] No wonder that some one at last resisted their extortions, as Hunne did now.

The clergy and the Church lawyers, on their side, were now

[1] See pages 34 and 39. [2] Colet on the Romans, chap. v., page 162.

equally aroused. A long-standing quarrel had come to a crisis by the refusal to pay a customary due; and, above all, by bringing a priest before the civil courts. The Church must be protected. Bishop Fitzjames, therefore, at once laid a charge of heresy against Hunne, and on this he was forthwith thrown into the Lollards' Tower—a part of old St. Paul's which stood where the south-west corner of the present cathedral, with the clock, is now built. He was accused of objecting to pay tithes; for having compared the bishops and priests to the Pharisees and Scribes who condemned Christ to death; for having spoken of the bishops and clergy as teachers but not doers of the law of God; and, lastly, for having in his possession the Book of Revelation, the Epistles, and the Gospels—"Wycliffe's damnable works."

After examination before the bishop's chancellor, Hunne was taken back to the Lollards' tower, and soon after was found hanged in his cell. On this an inquest was held, and the coroner's jury gave a verdict of "wilful murder" against the bishops' chancellor and the jailers; the poor man having, apparently, been first killed, and then hung up, to lead to the belief that he had committed suicide.

The clergy were now thoroughly alarmed, and tried to end the matter in a way worthy of them. Twelve days after Hunne's death, a great court was held, of three bishops, six notaries, and a crowd of Church lawyers, abbots, and priests of note. As Hunne was dead, proceedings could only be taken against his corpse, which was duly tried and sentenced to be given over to the magistrates to be burned, as that of one "who had defended the translation of Holy Scripture into the English tongue, which is prohibited by the laws of our Mother, Holy Church;" and this loathsome sentence was carried out two days later, at Smithfield, "to the great grief and disdain of the people."[1]

Such an atrocious outrage, as might have been expected, only

[1] Foxe, iv. 183 ff.

made the matter more serious for the Church. The bishop had seized Hunne's property as that of a heretic, but Parliament ordered it to be restored to his children, and a Bill was brought in to bring his alleged murderers to justice. This the clergy succeeded in quashing, but the prosecution still went on, and the bishop's chaplain and his summoner were indicted as principals. The old English principle thus maintained, of the supremacy of the State over the Church, and the equality of all citizens before the law, was a deadly attack on ecclesiastical pretensions, and threw bishops and priests alike into a frenzy of excitement. A compromise, at last, was made, after the matter had been brought before the king. Caring only to maintain the just dignity of his courts, and afraid to proceed too far against the Church, he arranged that if the chancellor surrendered to to take his trial, and pleaded not guilty, the attorney-general should dismiss him without a trial. But his escape only deepened the hatred against the Church, and the whole incident hastened on its downfall. "After that day," says Bishop Burnet, "the city of London was never well affected to the Popish clergy."

CHAPTER VIII.

CATHERINE OF ARRAGON

THE "New Learning," so diligently studied at Oxford since the closing years of the former century, had resulted in a literary revival in that University, but had left religious matters much as before, for Colet's stirring Lectures on the New Testament had not apparently disturbed the deep sleep of the past. The new intellectual life, however, contributed to a state of things at the sister University which first kindled a new spirit among the rising priesthood of England.

In the opening years of the century the condition of Cambridge was still what that at Oxford had been less than a generation before. The metaphysical trifling of the Schoolmen absorbed the whole time of study. Latin was neglected, and Greek unknown, and this the patrons of the New Learning, who included the Primate and some other dignitaries of the Church, resolved to reform. In 1510, Erasmus, who had been twice before in England, and had gained powerful friends in the scholars of Oxford, was invited by the king, then only a lad of nineteen, to come a third time, and make England his home. Himself well educated, Henry wished to appear, like the Florentine Medici, the patron of learned men. Accepting the invitation, Erasmus was erelong appointed Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, and afterwards Professor of Greek, and, in keeping with his character of a reformer of the Church from

within, signalised his entrance on his duties by the issue of his famous "Praise of Folly," a satire of inconceivable keenness on the monks and friars, and even the priests of the day. But much as they resented such an exposure, their dislike of the scholar intruded on the sleepy ignorance of the university was deepened to hatred by his enthusiasm for the New Learning: by his desire to make education at once more liberal and more real; by his avowed contempt of the dusty theology then in vogue, and his open determination to supersede the Schoolmen as text books, by direct appeal to the Gospels and the Epistles. But they were powerless to counteract his influence. His stay of four years at Cambridge kindled a wide zeal for the new studies, and stirred many to go farther than he himself ventured in canvassing even the claims and doctrines of the Church. Careful not to commit himself by open statement, he excited doubts worthy of one who remained the life-long friend of Colet. Intent on moderate reform, he started questions which others carried to their legitimate issues, and thus, to an extent he then little suspected, sowed the seed of the Reformation.

On his return to the Continent, his influence continued almost undiminished, and when, in 1516, the first edition of his Greek Testament was published at Basle, copies were eagerly sought by the students, to whom his presence and words had been an inspiration. One college, indeed, distinguished itself by forbidding its being brought within its walls, but the authorities of the Church, as a whole, had as yet so little fear of any evil arising from the circulation of the New Testament in Greek, however they might frown on it in the vernacular, that Leo X. allowed the second edition to be dedicated to himself. Yet it was a copy of this Testament that kindled the spark which afterwards spread the Reformation through the university.

Among the students, during the residence of Erasmus, were some destined to become famous in the religious struggle now at hand. Hugh Latimer had gone thither about 1506, and stayed till 1526, if not longer. Tyndale came to it from Oxford,

about 1512, and did not leave till about 1521. Cranmer had come to Jesus College, a boy of fourteen, in 1503, and stayed there till 1529. Gardiner, hereafter his wiliest enemy, was still, in 1520, in the university.

But it was not from these that God was to choose the earliest apostle of the Reformation. Among the students was one known as Little Bilney, a man, feeble and small, but nevertheless of high ability and vigour of character, and earnestly religious. Intended for the law, he had preferred the Church, but, like many in that age, had grown bewildered and oppressed, rather than satisfied, by its system. He had found peace of mind unattainable by the monkish austerities in repute, but at last, to use his own words, "I heard speak of Jesus even then, when the New Testament was first set forth by Erasmus. I bought it, being allured rather by the Latin than by the word of God, for at that time I knew not what it meant; and at the first reading, as I well remember, I chanced upon this sentence of St. Paul: 'It is a true saying, and worthy of all men to be embraced, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the chief and principal.' This one sentence, through God's instruction and inward working, did so exhilarate my heart, before wounded with the guilt of my sins, and almost in despair, that immediately I felt a marvellous comfort and quietness, insomuch that my bruised bones leaped for joy."[1]

Himself at peace, Bilney, as was inevitable, spread among those with whom he came in contact the new light he had received, till, after years, he had influenced a number of the students. His work was done, however, not by public teaching, but in private intercourse, for it was not in his nature to take a foremost place. To him, under God, Protestantism owes the conversion of Latimer, in 1524. Till then, the future Reformer had been a strenuous supporter of the Old System, and had zealously denounced the study of the Scriptures. But Bilney,

[1] Foxe iv. 635 f.

intentionally selecting him as his confessor, and insisting on his accepting the duty, threw such a flood of light on his honest heart as changed him from a stubborn Romanist to a hearty friend of the new opinions. Nor was Latimer the only prominent Reformer for whom we are indebted to this gentle and lowly spirit. It was to the leaven of Bilney's teaching that we owe well-nigh all that followed, for he, directly or indirectly, shaped the opinions of many of the leaders of the Reformation.

While the new era was thus silently drawing nearer at Cambridge, there was no less certain preparation for it in quarters where the thought of religious change was most abhorrent. God was using even the young king as an unconscious agent in the advancement of spiritual liberty in England.

The son of one who had done homage for his crown to the Pope; who had set out on his venture for it with a papal blessing, and regarded himself as holding it, under God, by the Pope's favour, Henry VIII. had grown up a zealot for Rome.

Born in 1491, six years after Bosworth field, he was a boy of eleven when the death of his elder brother, Arthur, in 1502, made him heir apparent. Though only sixteen when he died, the young prince had been a married man for nearly five months, and it was some time before it was certain that he would not have a posthumous heir. Henry had been taught to look to the Church as his future sphere, and had thus received a theological bias which he retained through life. He could be a cardinal at least, even while a boy, and possibly pope; nor was there anything to make ecclesiastical life a restraint to a prince, in those days of Alexander VI. Meanwhile, he was not proclaimed Prince of Wales till it was certain that Catherine would not have a child.

The marriage of Catherine, daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain, had been the subject of diplomacy while she was as yet only two years old, and her future husband one. Henry VII.'s throne was then unsteady, for Simnel had risen within a year after Bosworth Field, and the Earl of Warwick, the

true heir to the crown, was alive. Ferdinand, whose whole life was a long intrigue, wanted an alliance that would paralyze France on the north, and draw it away from Spain, and Henry could do both. To offer an Infanta as the future wife of his son was as great a bait to him as a similar offer to Louis Napoleon from a European sovereign would have been within two years after the *coup d'état*. Besides, England had a great trade with Spain for fruit, wine, and much else, and the markets might be open to her by special treaty, if Ferdinand's offer were accepted. Henry was to wrest from France the duchies of Roussillon and Cerdaña, under the shadow of the Pyrenees, at his own cost, for Ferdinand, but only when the marriage had finally taken place; and time might change much. Meanwhile, England would be sure of peace with Spain; the treaty of commerce with her, which had been made for ten years by Edward IV., and was on the point of expiring, would be renewed, and Henry would gain admission into the family of kings. Till now only the Pope and the King of France had acknowledged him. He would, moreover, have an ally to whom everything like heresy was, for political reasons, odious; for both being alike usurpers, they equally needed to support the Church and to be supported by it.

After infinite haggling, and attempts at mutual over reaching, the marriage treaty had been settled in 1489, when Catherine was three years and four months old, and Arthur ten months younger. On each side there was no intention to observe the articles further than selfish interest might lead; but, meanwhile, it stood written, that England and Spain should help each other in any war against France, undertaken by either; that trade should be free between the two countries, and that, in due time, Catherine should marry Prince Arthur. There was much, however, to do before a man like Ferdinand would finally permit the marriage. The claimant of the English throne known as Perkin Warbeck, was believed by both him and Isabella to be the true Duke of York, son of Edward IV., sent abroad in his infancy by Richard III., and, therefore, like the consummate plotters they

were, they first encouraged him secretly, and then betrayed him, that his death at the hands of Henry might clear the way for their daughter being queen. So Edward, Earl of Warwick, was direct heir to the crown, failing a son of Edward IV., and Ferdinand would not let Catherine marry Henry's son till Warwick also was made away with. When the one had been hanged and the other beheaded, he was willing that the marriage should at once go forward. "But," says Lord Bacon, "the King did not observe that he did bring a kind of malediction on the marriage." "The Lady Catherine herself, a sad and religious lady, long after, when King Henry VIII.'s resolution of a divorce from her was first made known to her, used some words—that she had not offended, but it was a judgment of God, for that her former marriage was made in blood; meaning that of the Earl of Warwick."

Catherine was married in London, on the 14th November, 1501, with great pomp and rejoicings, but on the 2nd of April following, she was a widow. The delicate bridegroom and she had never been separate for these five months, but now she was once more alone, and that in a strange land.

The news reached her parents at Toledo, on the 10th of May. They had married her solely for political motives, and now their game was spoiled by death, an enemy they could not reach. Yet they were equal to the occasion and to themselves. No two such criminals, perhaps, lived, even in that criminal age. They had reached the position they had gained, by intrigue, fraud, and when necessary, murder. Isabella had shut up her niece in a convent, to get her inheritance, and Ferdinand was before long to poison his son-in-law and shut up the widow, his own daughter Juana, for life, on pretext of insanity, to keep her from the kingdom that should have been hers at Isabella's death. Isabella was the special patron of the Inquisition, which was burning men by the thousand in Spain, for "heresy," and Ferdinand promoted the persecutions because he received the confiscated estates of the victims. The death of Prince Arthur

had deranged their plans, but they did not waste time in vain regrets, for within four weeks the messenger who had brought the news of his death was back again in London with a new marriage proposal. He was to claim from Henry the prompt repayment of the part of the dowry already paid. He was also to ask for the third part of Prince Arthur's estate, which had been settled on Catherine by her husband. Henry was thus to send her dowry back to Spain, but she was to keep all that she had received in England—goods, rents, manors, &c., and when sent home again to Spain, with all her treasures, it was to be at Henry's expense. To a man so penurious, such demands, it was thought, would make any means of escape acceptable, and one was, therefore, to be named—that a league should be made between England and Spain for mutual aid, to be cemented by a marriage between Catherine and the young prince Henry, Arthur's brother! Ferdinand had never needed Henry's alliance more: it was vital to him, as a war was opening, that Catherine should be heiress, in prospect, to the English throne. Before they had sent Henry condolence for the death of his son,—their son-in-law,—her father and mother had plotted his widow's marriage with that son's brother!

That Catherine was in all senses the widow of the dead prince, and that such a marriage as they proposed would outrage all received proprieties, was frankly admitted. But neither the interest nor the good name of their daughter, nor even the shock to all established religious ideas such a match must give, could sway them, when policy urged them forward. Ferdinand, however, soon had his hands too full of his affairs in France and Italy, to take much part in this new intrigue, and it was therefore left to Isabella to force Catherine on Henry, now only twelve years old, even before it was known whether she might not yet bear a child to his dead brother.

The uncertainty respecting this caused the king and his council great anxiety. They could not proclaim him heir apparent till it was settled one way or other. Yet a doubtful

succession had led to the long civil wars, and no one could tell what might be the result if the king died with no legally acknowledged heir. Still, nothing could be done but wait.

Henry received the overture coldly, for it was in every way distasteful to him. He wanted peace, and was invited to engage in war. He wished above all things a sure title for his heirs, and was asked to sanction a marriage which might invalidate that of all his posterity. Besides, there were religious scruples not easily to be quieted. He, therefore, referred the matter to his council, that, at least, he might gain time.

In that council the two leading men were Fox, Bishop of Winchester, and Warham, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury and Lord Chancellor, admittedly the first ecclesiastical lawyer in England. Fox was willing that the proposals should be heard and examined; Warham wanted them rejected at once, without discussion, as abhorrent to religion, and an outrage against even the letter of Scripture.

It was, indeed, certain that the marriage of a dead brother's wife was expressly forbidden in two texts of Leviticus,[1] and in one of these such a union was expressly branded with the curse that it would be childless. These passages were the basis of the marriage law in this particular, as they still are in England; for it is because of them that marriages with brothers-in-law or sisters-in-law are prohibited among us. It was, moreover, assumed by men like Warham, as needing no second thought, that, while the Pope was free to cancel any law of the Church, it was altogether beyond his province or power, to annul or change the laws of God. The English people reverenced law and order, recognized the rules of human justice, and honoured the words of Scripture. Henry consulted his Chancellor, and Master of the Rolls,[2] and was told that no court in Rome would, for a moment, think of sanctioning such a marriage. With the plain commands of God, he said, forbidding it as they did, no Pope, no court, no

[1] Chap. xviii. 16; xx. 20. [2] Warham, see page 96.

college could dispense, and this was the general feeling of the honest English mind. Henry himself made sure that he ran no risk, even if, for motives of policy, he outwardly affected to think seriously of what he had, in his heart, determined he would never permit to be carried out. To break the discussion off abruptly would be to bring on war with Spain, to quicken the Yorkist party to life again, and put his own life in jeopardy. He would refer the matter to Rome, for did not his lawyers tell him that the Pope was certain to reject the suit, however strongly pressed?

But Henry, with all his astuteness, was no match for the shameless woman who was trading with her daughter for her own ends. Spain was at war with both the Pope and the French king, in Italy: she had conquered Naples, and wished to hold it, and Ferdinand and Isabella were bent on marrying Catherine to the young prince, though they knew the marriage was illegal,—that the king of England, by descents on the French coast, might enable them to hold the Italian provinces they had torn from their lawful sovereign.

A form had been drafted out by Henry's lawyers, to be submitted to the Pope, stating, among other things, that the marriage of Catherine with Prince Arthur had been duly solemnized, and had afterwards been consummated as the canon law required, and he was formally asked whether a dispensation was possible in such a case.

The moment a copy of this document was received in Spain, Ferdinand sent off an envoy to press the Pope, Alexander VI., to issue a bull authorizing the marriage. Alexander was a Spaniard, and he and his children had received high favours, as bribes, from Ferdinand, and had been allowed by him to riot in their unspeakable crimes and violence, till they had harried and trampled under foot the whole of Central Italy. Henry had stood aloof from such a Pope, and had set his face against the sale of indulgences on pretence of a holy war, when he found that the money taken from his people was spent on name-

less infamies and crimes in Rome. Yet he could not hinder his case being laid even before such a tribunal.

Just then, Alexander was poisoned by the sweetmeats and wine he had intended for Cardinal Adriano, and Pope Julius II. was elected; but Cæsar Borgia was still master of the Castle of St. Angelo in Rome, and of a hundred strongholds in the Papal States, and might swoop down on the Pope at any moment. No temptation could be stronger to sign a bull authorizing Catherine's marriage, and thus secure the support of both England and Spain. Meanwhile, Henry had never signed the articles to be laid before the Pope, or forwarded a copy of them. He had simply given notice of an intended appeal. Many months had passed, and the Spanish envoy at Rome was urgent. But so bad was the case; so illegal the dispensation asked, that Julius put the matter off on any pretext or on none.

Ferdinand now tried another course. A second petition was prepared, saying that Catherine had been married by a form of words to Arthur; that the marriage had *perhaps* been consummated, but had left no issue; that another marriage was desired by all parties, and praying him to give his apostolic permission. Alexander, it said, had given a dispensation for Maria, Catherine's elder sister, to marry her dead sister's husband. But Julius was ill at ease; what Borgia had done was no precedent for him: he would not seal the draft. Henry, of course, at once repudiated the new document. There was no *perhaps* in the original draft, and its omission was a fraud on purpose to deceive, which made the writing worthless.

All this time Henry had not signed the articles; but now, a great battle won by the Spaniards in Italy, and successes gained by them in Southern France, made further delay impossible. The Pope lay at the mercy of Ferdinand, who had only to be silent, and civil war would break out in the very streets of Rome. Above all men, he feared Cæsar Borgia, the soul of all the tumults, wars, and crimes, of the past years, but Ferdinand tried to force him to grant the bull by entrapping Borgia, and

consigning him to a fortress in Spain, to be kept as a terror to Julius till the bull was signed; for, though in prison for the time, might he not be let loose if the signature were refused?

But the Pope would not, even now, sign it. He felt the unlawfulness of what was asked; felt that it would only sanction outwardly what no document could make legal or right, and might involve a disputed succession, with all its horrors. It was a brave struggle for conscience. Isabella knew, however, how to overreach him. She had fallen into what proved a mortal sickness, and sent word to him of her condition. One thing alone could cure her, said her envoy. She had set her heart on making Catherine Queen of England; let her only hear that the bull was sealed, and she hoped she would get better. She would not ask more. The Pope might keep it a secret, and, as such, it would have no power. At last, the Pope, in pity for her, and perhaps in natural dread of a power which could do as it pleased with him if he refused, put the leaden seal to the bull, and after showing it to the envoy, with the injunction that no one was to know of it but Isabella, took the document and locked it in a secret drawer.

The wily mother had now gained another step, and the last was secured before long. She herself had been cheated into a dubious marriage by a bull forged for the purpose by Ferdinand, and she was now as fertile as he in crooked expedients to gain her ends. Another message presently reached the Vatican. The queen was dying, but could not bear to pass away till she had seen the bull with her own eyes. Would the Pope entrust it to her messenger? No one should see it but herself: she would only look at it and return it. She asked the favour as a dying woman. Unable to refuse such a request, in an evil moment the envoy got it, for the purpose and on the conditions that had been stated.

No sooner, however, did Isabella, dying though she was, receive the document, than she announced it far and near; issuing a proclamation in every city, town, and port of Spain,

that the Pope had legalized Catherine's marriage. Nor was this enough. Ferdinand, forthwith, sent a copy to Henry, with the request that he would make it known by his letters patent in England. But he carefully suppressed any mention of how it had been obtained, under what promises, by what treachery. Henry as well as the Pope, was overreached.

It was now 1504, and Catherine was still in England, but no longer as she had been, for she had fallen deeply in love with the great beautiful boy of now well-nigh fourteen, almost a man in appearance and strength, though so young. But the king was as resolved as ever to prevent the marriage. Committed as he was, he had to sign conditional agreements, but the prince would be at liberty to refuse to accept them, as soon as he was fourteen—which he would be in three months.

Before young Henry had been one hour of age this was done.[1] A meeting of seven of the Privy Council was held at Richmond, at which the prince deposed that he had been contracted to Catherine, Princess of Wales, during his minority: that he had now attained full age: that he could judge and act for himself: that he refused to ratify the contract that had been made for him, and denounced it as null and void.

Thus things stood while Henry VII. lived. Catherine's dowry continued unpaid by Ferdinand, because he believed that whether paid or not, Catherine would not be allowed to marry the Prince. "This marriage," wrote one of Catherine's suite, "weighs too heavily on the king's conscience; it will never come to pass."

The Queen, Elizabeth of York, had died in 1503, at the age of thirty-seven; young, beautiful, and good; leaving her monument behind her in the great hospital she had persuaded her husband to found in the ancient Savoy Palace, in London. The magnificent chapel known by her husband's name had been begun after Arthur's death, but Abbot Islip had soon to go on

[1] June 27, 1504.

with it as her own tomb, where Henry almost wearied to be once more at her side. At last, in 1509, his time also had come, and young Prince Henry was king.

Meanwhile, Catherine had remained in England, secluded as far as might be; for a repudiated bride could not be much seen; but still bent with a woman's fixity of purpose on getting Henry for her husband. These years had been an unceasing intrigue on her part, at home and abroad, to achieve this one desire of her heart. Her letters and story show her to have been strong-willed, of impetuous temper, by no means disposed to play the nun, willing to finesse, intrigue, equivocate, and overreach to gain her ends. In person she was attractive, for her figure was tall and full, her eyes a fine blue, her hair golden and abundant.

Henry, at his accession, in 1509, was hardly eighteen years of age—Catherine, twenty-four; but a woman of that age is as old as a man at forty, and a boy of eighteen is only a great child. His person and accomplishments, however, were fit to have made him a woman's prizé, even had he been less than a king. He was taller than any of his bodyguard, though they were chosen for height, and his fulness of limb and breadth of chest were in proportion. In features he was exceedingly handsome. In every game and sport he easily took the lead, for nothing could tire him, and his strength and skill seldom found an equal. Nor had his mind been neglected, for his father had given him a first-rate education. A lad of uncommon abilities, he was no less intellectually active and versatile. Intended at first for a priest, he had sharpened his wits on Aquinas, and was always proud of his theology. There was little that came before him on which he could not say something to the point.

When he had renounced Catherine, four years before, he had been too young to know anything of youthful passion; but the very fact that a woman like her had been contracted to him had doubtless dwelt in his thoughts, and she, in her occasional visits to his father's court as Ambassadress of Spain, which her father had made her, to keep her in England and bring her about the

king, had as certainly used all the arts to excite his regard which a woman so much older than he could ply so well. He and she had, for long times together, been allowed to meet as youth and maid who might be man and wife, even during the empty negotiations after he had renounced her; and though this had been latterly discontinued to a large extent, it is no wonder that a boy then of sixteen fell in love with a woman six years older, who was bent on getting him. Before the old king died she had made sure of her conquest. The point of conscience which had made his father resolutely forbid the match rose again, indeed, for a time in his mind, so that he mooted it to his lords, but it was soon laid to sleep when he met Catherine once more. Meanwhile the Council debated the subject, and were divided respecting it. If the marriage did not take place there would be instant war with Spain; Richard de la Pole, the Yorkist, would be let loose on the country; Henry's sister was betrothed to Ferdinand's grandson, Charles, and this marriage would be annulled; the Pope, as it seemed, would be affronted; and Henry would appear to set his own judgment above that of the head of the Church. Isabella's theft of the bull had paralyzed even Warham for the time, for, after all, the document was genuine, though it had never been legally published at Rome.

But the matter had got beyond argument, and the two mainly concerned settled it for themselves, by being privately married at Greenwich on the 11th of June, 1509. Yet many people shared the opinion of Warham, the foremost canonist of the age, that Catherine, as Arthur's widow, could never be Henry's lawful wife. At the wedding everything was studiously arranged to make it be forgotten that she had ever been married. All documents that said she had been so were suppressed: even the bull was not read, and Catherine herself appeared in white, as a virgin bride, in the midst of a cloud of damsels dressed in keeping, and of a cavalcade in which nothing was omitted that could foster the illusion.

But though the young queen had won her husband's heart, even the first year of her marriage had its shadows. Two parties showed themselves at Court, one for, the other against the marriage. The only two bishops who upheld it were Fox of Winchester, and Fisher of Rochester, who held—like modern Ultramontanes—that a Pope could do no wrong, and that it was sinful to criticise any Papal act. Of Warham she felt an instinctive fear, for she knew his opinion and the weight it carried.

Nor could she tolerate the coquetting with Church reform, which characterized those whom Warham favoured. Herself a sister of the Order of St. Francis; the daughter of a Franciscan mother who had set up the Inquisition in Spain, and had made Torquemada her bosom friend; of a father who bore the name of "The Catholic King," and, like his wife and her confessors, was the deadly enemy of printing and the New Learning; —the Holy War against the Infidel in Granada, the great remembrance of her childhood;—with two of her bastard sisters in convents, and a bastard brother an archbishop, she was inevitably a Romanist of the most bigoted type. She hated France because Louis, its king, led on by Cardinal Amboise, the great opponent of her marriage among the Cardinals, was intent on a grand reform of the Church; and she hated Warham because he sympathized with France and its Church policy, as well as for private reasons.

Her whole future turned on her bearing a son. If she did so, it would crush all dispute as to the marriage, by silencing men's tongues as to the curse on it if it were really illegal. Ferdinand, also, could then count on getting the aid from Henry, for which the whole marriage intrigue had been concocted. He would be able, by English help, to make Navarre his own, and to found a Spanish kingdom in Italy. But, on the last day of January, 1510, Catherine bore a female child, and it was dead. Was the marriage unholy after all? She would conceal her misfortune, and trust to the future. But Henry's

scruples had received a rough resurrection. The murmurs at the Council deepened, and the Spanish envoy heard to his dismay that many of its members made no secret of their opinion, that Henry had done wrong in marrying his brother's wife.

At last, on Tuesday, New Year's morning, 1511, a prince was born, to the infinite delight of Henry and the nation. The opponents of the marriage were at last put to shame. Bonfires and rejoicings were universal. Henry rode on pilgrimage to our Lady of Walsingham, the great centre of English pilgrimages,[1] alighting from his horse at a distance, and walking barefoot to the shrine, to beseech the Virgin to protect the young Prince of Wales. But on the 22nd of February the child died. Catherine's troubles almost overwhelmed her, for she knew that men were everywhere whispering, that if a man took his brother's wife he would not leave a child behind him.

To make things worse for her, Ferdinand, after plotting ever since Henry's accession to get him to go to war, ostensibly for the protection of Pope Julius, who was at war with the French in Italy, but really for his own ends, induced him, at last, to league with Venice, the Pope, and Spain, nominally to assist Holy Church, but really for his own advantage. Zeal for the papacy doubtless actuated Henry in part, but the dread of France getting too strong for his own safety was also without question a strong motive. Ten thousand men were sent to San Sebastian to attack France from that quarter, but Ferdinand having forged a papal bull, pretending that Navarre had offended the Pope and lay under his interdict, tried to get them to attack it instead. He had already kept the army without tents, hospitals, or stores, on the bare flats, for many weeks, till they were struck by fever and dysentery, and saw, at length, that he had been basely deceiving them. His troops, which were to have attacked France for the Pope, were ravaging Navarre, with which England had no quarrel, for himself. The

[1] See page 75.

English commanders, furious at treachery so base, returned at once with their force to England. Henry was fierce at Ferdinand, but he stood faithful to the Pope. He began to feel, indeed, that, from his fatal marriage to this last step, he had been tricked and betrayed by his father-in-law, but Holy Church was honestly dear to him, and he would keep his pledged word to help her, however others acted. Catherine, meanwhile, fanned the flame, to carry out her father's wishes, and the peace party was overborne. But, while Henry was preparing to land with an army in France, Ferdinand, having secured Navarre, had made a separate peace with the French king, leaving his son-in-law, when he came, to fight alone. It was another instance of the treachery which was gradually turning Henry's heart against everything Spanish.

But a fresh blow was coming. While her husband was still in France Catherine bore another son, who lived only a few days. The terror about her marriage had sunk into her soul. The birth was studiously concealed. Not even the ladies in attendance were allowed to know of it, lest this child also should die, and tongues get more food for evil whispers.

A fresh treachery of her father added to the misfortunes of the unhappy queen. Ferdinand, at Henry's request, had made a new treaty with him, promising co-operation in the war now going on against France, and to marry his grandson Charles to Henry's sister, Mary. To Henry's astonishment, however, he soon after learned that Charles had been promised to an infant daughter of the French King, to the rejection of Mary, and that Ferdinand had also undertaken to help that monarch to drive the English out of France. Meanwhile, this exemplary father-in-law had actually induced the Pope and the Emperor to desert Henry, who was thus left alone, with a war with France and Scotland on his hands, begun for Ferdinand's ends and by his intrigues.

All that followed towards Catherine could not but be affected by such treatment from her father. Henry's whole nature

seemed changed for the worse by the amazing perfidy of which he had so often been the victim. It opened his eyes to much in the past; showed him how he had been duped to marry, for the selfish ends of his father-in-law; and waked afresh all the suspicions as to the legality of the union. But he still bore himself loyally to his wife. It was only 1514, yet, already, the party in the ascendant at court spoke openly of the queen as a concubine rather than a wife. The alliance with Spain was presently broken off, and France, by Wolsey's instigation, chosen instead; Mary, Henry's sister, being married to the French king —a girl of nineteen to a broken, dying man, of fifty-three. The first grand act in Henry's reign had ended, and, henceforth, the baser features of his character were slowly to be developed. Yet it was long years before they quite gained the mastery.

CHAPTER IX.

BEGINNING OF THE QUARREL WITH ROME.

NEVER had Pope a more devoted and faithful supporter than Henry VIII. He had entered into the war with France in part to preserve the balance of power in Western Europe, threatened for the moment by the French king, between whom and Spain, England in those years sought to bear herself so as to keep either from unduly preponderating. But he had been specially zealous in this case from its involving his defending the Pope, whom France threatened, and he had stood faithful to him when all others deserted his cause. Yet from his own wide culture he was friendly to the New Learning, and the whole spirit of the age led him to favour the scheme of Warham, which was afterwards that of Wolsey also, to reform the Church from within. Of any doctrinal changes he never dreamed, even to the end.

Little, however, could be done as things were. The clergy were so little disposed to abate any of their claims, or reform even the most clamant abuses, that a law passed in 1513 refusing the benefit of clergy to murderers and robbers, who though they could read, were not in holy orders, was denounced by the priesthood, as "contrary to the law of God and the liberties of Holy Church," and as entailing spiritual censures on all who assented to it. The gross ignorance of the laity had made reading so exclusively an accomplishment of

the clergy that anyone who could boast of it had come to be reckoned an ecclesiastic, and they would not give up the fiction. Their blind unreasoning conservatism would make no concession from things as they were, though Hunne's case was presently to show them how hollow the ground was beneath them, and though the Act was to be in force only till the next meeting of Parliament. Many murderers and felons who claimed clerical privileges were nevertheless brought before the king's courts, where they could be duly punished, instead of before the courts of the bishops, where they were allowed to escape with a nominal penalty.

On the first of January, 1515, Louis of France died, three months after his marriage with the Princess Mary, who forthwith married Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, her old love. The new king, Francis I., was devoted equally to his pleasures and to military glory, which erelong drew him into the old struggle with Ferdinand for rule in Italy, and involved Henry in a fresh war with France, as the steadfast friend of the Papacy, and to preserve the "balance of power." Wolsey, now Archbishop of York, and in the full tide of his glory at court, had already set his heart on the tiara, if anything happened; but Leo X. was so young a man that his hopes were only in the distant future. As a Churchman he was, of course, loyal to Rome; and war with France, partly on its account, at once increased his own power as Viceroy in Henry's absence, and flattered the king's passion for glory and his zeal for the Pope. Indeed, whether Henry was abroad or at home, all the business of the State now passed through the minister's hands. To please the king and propitiate himself, a Cardinal's hat was presently sent him, and he was appointed legate at Henry's request, thus taking rank above even Warham, the primate. He knew the dignity was illegal, but what likelihood was there of his being brought to account for an honour procured for him by the Crown itself? Even Warham, mortified at this last promotion of the favourite, and unable to endure the slights received from him, erelong put

another step upwards in his reach, by resigning the woolsack, to which Wolsey was at once raised. It is only just, however, to say that he discharged its duties with such marked ability and uprightness, that even Sir Thomas More spoke of him as a great chancellor. He was, thus, head of both Church and State, and virtually held all the power of the realm, guiding its policy whether for war or for peace.[1]

Parliament met in November, and erelong the bishops were in furious debate to repeal the Act of 1513, giving up clerical murderers to the civil power. Yet the people were at the instant so restive in regard to the Church that Wolsey had written to the Pope protesting against his taking the same dues twice in a year, and the collectors of Peter's pence reported that they could not gather it.[2] Books were published by ecclesiastics demanding that the secular judge should have no jurisdiction whatever over even nominally ecclesiastical persons, and fierce replies and counter-replies were bandied about. The Church had striven from the Conqueror's day for immunity from any jurisdiction but its own, and had as steadfastly been refused it. England would not give it a place outside the statute book. A civil court had always claimed, and often exercised the right to reverse the sentence of a bishop's court, and now Henry let it be felt that, however Edward IV., or Richard III., or his father, had given way for the time, to gain clerical support for their doubtful titles, he took the old stand of English kings once more. Before all the judges, the chief civil and ecclesiastical lawyers, and members of both Houses, he declared it to be his resolution to maintain the rights of his crown and the jurisdiction of his courts. His despotic humours would not even brook the legitimate restraints of the Constitution, for this Parliament was the last till 1523. Its independence, in refusing to be bullied into granting money at Wolsey's dictation, made

[1] Giustiniani's Despatches, i. 139.

[2] Brewer Cal. of State Papers, i. 5465; ii. 115.

both king and favourite resolve to dispense with it for the future.

In July, 1516, seven years after his marriage, Henry had the delight of seeing the first child of his union that lived, but it was a girl—Mary—afterwards of ill-omened name. Yet the kindlier part of his nature welled up at the sight of the infant, and, if he could not have a son, he at least took every care to establish his succession in the person of the baby daughter. Meanwhile England, as usual, held the balance between France and Spain. Ferdinand had died in the summer, and his grandson Charles, a lad of sixteen, succeeded—for his mother, Juana, who ought to have reigned over Castile, was kept shut up by her son, as she had been by her father, on pretence that she was a lunatic. The change affected Wolsey only for good. He got pensions from both sides; was made general collector in England for the Pope, and administrator of all the sees held by foreign absentee bishops.

All England was now agitated more than ever by the question of the succession. There never had been a queen of England, and the infant princess might find her title challenged, with all the disastrous convulsions of the old civil wars. In November, 1518, another daughter was born, but it died, and its mother, worn out by so much physical and mental trouble, had shrunk, prematurely, into a sickly, austere, old woman. Henry was only twenty-seven, but she was far older than her age—thirty-three. Hitherto he had been nobly faithful to her; but the shadow of the curse was deepening, and he himself was no longer what he had been. Henceforth he left her, as his wife, and took a mistress, who erelong, to his great joy, bore him a son—hailed from his birth as the Duke of Richmond. In 1519 the young King Charles—Catherine's nephew—though only as old as the century, was chosen Emperor of Germany, to the mortification of Francis, who hoped to have himself been elected; but the only effect on Henry's position, for the time, was his being courted, to the

delight of the nation, by both. Receiving and paying royal visits filled up great part of 1520.

Henry's first act of legal murder, on political grounds, marked the opening of 1521. Edward Stafford, Duke of Buckingham, was the fifth in descent from Anne Plantagenet, grand-daughter of Edward III. His father had been beheaded by Richard III.; his grandfather, great grandfather, and great great grandfather had fallen in the civil wars of their times, and he himself was doomed to no milder fate. It was reported to the king that he had said that should Catherine have no son he would succeed to the throne, but there is no proof beyond vague assertion by a spy that he actually expressed himself so. Henry, in truth, was jealous of one so near the throne, and that the more because only a daughter stood between him and it. A jury of peers was found subservient enough to carry out his purpose by condemning him to death, and he was beheaded on the 17th May; the people venting their indignation on Wolsey, as the supposed instigator of the crime, by loud cries of "The butcher's son!" But Henry's own nature was ferocious as that of the tiger, though, like it, he had feline softness of bearing when he chose. The words of More were already coming true, under the growing despotism which was striking terror into all men's hearts, that "there will never be wanting some pretence to decide in the King's favour; as, that equity is on his side, or the strict letter of the law, or some forced interpretation of it; or, if none of these, that the Royal prerogative ought, with conscientious judges, to outweigh all other considerations." Nor had the true character of his master escaped the sharp eyes of Wolsey. "He is a prince," said he, "of a most royal courage; sooner than miss any part of his will he will endanger one-half of his kingdom, and I do assure you I have often kneeled to him, sometimes for three hours together, to persuade him from his appetite, and could not prevail."[1]

[1] Cavendish, 139.

The publication of Luther's book against the Pope and his excommunication at the Diet of Worms[1] created a great sensation in England, and proved the cause of the final estrangement of the New Learning, in the persons of its first promoters, from the Reformation movement in Germany. Colet and Grocyn, who had been favourite preachers at Court, had just died (1519); Parr was one of the Secretaries of State; Linacre was Henry's physician;[2] More a privy councillor; Tunstall Master of the Rolls; and Warham survived, as primate, till 1532. Hitherto they had looked with a friendly eye on the Lutheran agitation, expecting a reformation of the Church from within, as its result. But Luther's open repudiation of the Pope and his intemperate language showed that they had to expect an ecclesiastical revolution, and not a mere quiet trimming of the vessel of the Church. Henceforth the conservatism of the New Learning divorced it from the great movement begun in Germany, and destined to spread erelong to England. More wrote a reply to Luther, but showed his hostility to the turn affairs had taken by stooping to as unworthy coarseness as Luther himself, without the excuse of being a miner's son. Henry also rushed into the conflict, and published a fierce attack on the Reformer, in a book called "The Assertion of the Seven Sacraments." The first generation of the New Learning was passing away, and younger and less conservative men, with whom Henry had nothing in common, were taking their place.

Such a champion as the young king had rarely come forward to uphold the Papacy. It did not content him to defend its religious side: he was so unrestricted in his homage to its political claims that even Sir Thomas More ventured to remonstrate. But he would not modify a line, alleging that there was a secret reason against his doing so. The legitimacy of his marriage with Catherine could only be maintained by claiming

[1] April 17, 1521.

[2] Died 1524.

the divine power of the Pope to alter the teaching of Scripture. Marriage with a brother's wife was expressly forbidden. To have limited the Papal power to that of dispensing from Church laws would not suffice : its right to dispense with the divine law must also be defended. So deeply was the matter of his marriage in Henry's thoughts, though divorce was not as yet mentioned. His reasoning seems to have led even More to reflect on the whole subject more deeply than before, for, from this time, he also seems to have held this divine power to belong to the Pope; and we know that he did so to the end, with such fervour, that at last he died rather than give it up. Meanwhile, he was not so extreme, and wondered at the king's language. Henry was doubtless sincere, for he had inherited from his father the loftiest conceptions of the power of Rome, and like him he even held that he had received from it his imperial "crown and sceptre," and fancied that he "could not do it too much honour"—notions that More honestly told him he had not heard of before.[1]

But in his cooler moments, as we have seen, Henry had acted more like a king, and it was only by a false logic, and an oblivion of facts, he flattered Rome as he now did, in contradiction to his instincts, and to the traditional policy of the nation. "Both Crown and Church of England," says Cardinal Manning,[2] "with a steady opposition, resisted the entrance and encroachment of the secularized ecclesiastical power of the Pope in England." A hundred times had it been tried to get the kings of England to do homage to Rome, but none of them had done it except John, who was execrated for doing it. "I will not do it," said Henry II., to a legate. "Neither do we, nor will we, nor can we, nor ought we, to permit our lord the king to do so," said the Parliament of Edward I. The act of John was declared by the peers to have been done without consent of the estates,

[1] Wordsworth's Eccl. Biog. ii. 169.

[2] Manning on the Unity of the Church, 361.

and contrary to his oath. "If the Pope appeals to force," said the Commons, "we will gainstand him to the utmost of our power." Longshanks himself had already shewn his stout English heart in brave words. "If both the Emperor," said he, "and the King of France should take the Pope's part, I am ready to give battle to them in defence of the liberties of my crown." So Henry was to speak thirteen years later, but as yet he was more than ever at the Pope's devotion, in return for the soft flattery with which Leo greeted him as "Defender of the Faith," on account of his book. "His majesty is most obsequious towards the Pope," wrote Guistiniani in 1515. "Words cannot exaggerate their mutual good-will." Ferdinand's cold cynicism spoke of him as "a pious fool."

In December, 1521, Pope Leo X. suddenly died, at the age of forty-six, and Wolsey fondly hoped to get his place, which Charles V. had promised to secure him. Henry's jealousy of France, his desire for glory, and his zeal for the Pope, had enabled his favourite to continue the Spanish League, in spite of all that had been suffered from it—Charles having won him over by the bait of the tiara. But the Emperor, as cold and false as Ferdinand, had only played with him, and Adrian VI. was chosen in his stead. The game, however, was not yet over. Charles, ever adroit, held out to Wolsey the prospect of the next vacancy, which could not be far distant, and war with France was again declared; Charles, a youth of twenty-one, binding himself, under pain of excommunication, to marry the infant Mary, now six years old, as a pledge of friendship towards Henry!

Lutheranism was, meanwhile, making progress. In the interval since the burning of the Pope's Bull, the press had been active, and many books, not a few in English, but printed abroad, had been imported stealthily into England. In March, 1521, Warham the Primate, and Longland Bishop of Lincoln, pressed Wolsey to proceed against the growing heresy. The priests, they said, were becoming tainted; and tracts by Reformers began to fly about. Wolsey, in answer, published the Pope's Bull, con-

demning Luther's doctrines, and peremptorily commanded all who had Lutheran books to give them up; but he was no friend of persecution, and preferred burning the books rather than the bodies of the Reformers. He was, in fact, filled with grand schemes of his own to reform the Church from within, and did not want to create prejudice that might make them miscarry. A great college, which would teach the New Learning, was to be endowed at Oxford, from the revenues of sequestrated monasteries; schools were to be founded over the land, and new bishoprics, endowed from the revenues of monasteries, were to restore the discipline of the clergy at large. He hoped, indeed, to be Pope, and then he would reform the Church universal, and after that, make a crusade against the Turk, and drive him from Christendom. But the true worth of his dreams may be measured by his own life. The grossest of pluralists, he would bring back apostolic simplicity; the father of a family, though a priest, he would restore priestly morals; the most unscrupulous of politicians, he would inaugurate the reign of truth; the tempter of the king to every sin, for his own selfish ends, he would call men to imitate Christ. He had given his own bastard son two rectories, six prebendary stalls, two archdeaconries, a chancellorship, a provostship, and a deanery, and was he not even now trying to get him made Bishop of Durham, the richest see in England? He forgot, moreover, that the Church, in its existing state, was morally dead, and that no galvanism could quicken it into new life.

The immense treasures left by Henry VII. had long been spent in war, in selfish indulgence, idle display, and gambling. The subsidy granted in 1513 was also gone, and money was urgently needed by Henry. Wolsey had steadily trained him to play the despot, dispensing with Parliaments, and ruling by arbitrary personal authority. A true patriot would have sought to raise the Commons and protect their rights against a throne already too powerful by the destruction of the old nobility in the civil wars. But Henry was to be autocrat in the State, and him-

self in the Church; or, rather, himself in both; for though the king gave the final word in everything, the glory and odium of executing his will were left to Wolsey. Forced loans were demanded from London and other cities and towns, and a survey taken of all England for arbitrary taxation, till a revolution was threatened, which must have been fatal to a throne unsupported by any armed force, as was the case with Henry's. The old English spirit would not submit to such measures, and for the first time in eight years, Parliament had to be summoned, but only to get money. Fierce wrangling followed, and Wolsey having come to the House to dragoon it into submission, was required to leave before anything was done. A subsidy was voted at last, but Parliament was prorogued, to meet no more for the next seven years, after Wolsey had fallen. The Cardinal had made himself "infinitely hated,"[1] for he had brought the King into collision with the people, and his furious threats, at opposition to the royal wishes, had shown how hurtful his influence had been.

In September, 1523, Pope Adrian died, and Wolsey was once more deceived by Charles in his hopes of succeeding to the Papal throne. The Spanish league might stand for a time, but this sealed its fate, and peace was made with France in 1525. Charles had indeed given Henry good grounds for going over to the French side, by casting doubts on the legitimacy of Mary,[2] and obtaining a dispensation from his betrothal to her, and marrying the infanta of Portugal. Mary, now nine years old, was presently proposed for a French marriage, but the old question as to her mother's marriage seems to have been raised in this quarter also. The effect of such affronts, acting on Henry's own long cherished feelings, was soon apparent. His determination to obtain a divorce was, apparently, henceforth fixed. But, meanwhile, a new personage appeared on the scene, destined to bring the matter to a crisis.

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[1] Burnet, i. 18.

[2] Ibid. i. 9.

In the year 1514, a girl in her fourteenth year had come to court, as one of the suite of the Princess Mary, in her bridal journey to France, to marry old King Louis. She had been born and brought up in Kent, and was just a year younger than the century.[1] The Duke of Norfolk, the steady impugner of Queen Catherine's marriage, was her grandfather; and her aunt, whose name she bore, was Anne Plantagenet, sister of Henry's mother, Elizabeth of York. The daughter of this couple, Lady Elizabeth Howard, had married Sir Thomas Boleyn, and after bearing two girls and three sons, had died in 1512, when Anne, her firstborn, was in her eleventh year, and while her husband was abroad on the king's service. Two of her sons had died before her, and thus the two girls and a boy only remained.

Anne had been well and carefully trained, and her bright intelligence and love of reading had carried her far beyond the usual female accomplishments of the day.

Nor had her higher education been neglected. Her father's character may be judged from Erasmus having dedicated to him in 1533, a book on the Creed, the Ten Commandments, and the Lord's Prayer. He had previously sent him at his own request an exposition of the twenty-second Psalm, and shortly before his death, in 1536, wrote for him a short devotional book on "Preparation for Death."[2] A household, the head of which had tastes such as these indications show, must have surrounded Anne from her childhood with the healthiest moral influences.

Her father's connection with the Norfolk family had taught her from her earliest years to look on the queen as not really Henry's wife, and this must have been her feeling when she came to court. She did so at an unlucky time for Catherine, for Henry was then furious at his father-in-law's duplicity, and had found the queen intriguing in her worthless father's

[1] She was born in 1501.

[2] Drummond's Erasmus, ii. 331.

interest against Mary's marriage with the French king. Norfolk, Anne's grandfather, moreover, as the head of the French party, and of the opponents of Catherine's own marriage, was in the rough ascendant.

In France, Mary kept Anne near her; for her perfect French, and her airy cleverness, made her equally useful and agreeable. When Louis died, eleven weeks after his marriage, she remained in close attendance on the young widow, but was presently transferred to the household of the new French queen, Claude, where she remained till recalled by Henry, as a connection of Norfolk's, in 1521, on the expected breaking out of a French war.

On her return to England, after seven years spent in France, Anne was presently named to a position in attendance on the queen at court. Now nearly twenty-one, she had grown into a pale woman, not in a strict sense beautiful, but alive with bright intelligence and vivacity, which sparkled from eyes that of themselves made her charming. She had enjoyed the finest intellectual society of France, which consisted largely of friends of the New Learning, from whom she caught a liberal enthusiasm of thought and heart. She was widely read, and wrote an English style to be envied for its purity and brightness. The life of every circle she entered, playful and sedate by turns, she was always innocent and charming. Men forgot her plainness the moment she smiled or spoke.

Erelong, as was natural, she had a lover—Lord Percy—and she loved him in return. But Wolsey had designed a different match for her, and removed her from court, forcing Percy to marry another. No wonder that Anne vowed she would one day repay the Cardinal for blighting the first love-flowers of her heart. If she could be brought to yield, Anne was to be married to her cousin, James Butler, a Kilkenny Irishman, whom the marriage, it was thought, might tame from the habitual rebellion of his race. But she had a will of her own, and refused him definitely. Meanwhile, when sent away from

court, she had returned to her father's house, Hever Castle, seven miles west of Tunbridge in Kent.

In 1524, her grandfather and friend, the Duke of Norfolk, died, and was succeeded by his brother, who had conceived a dislike of the Boleyns from private grudges, and of Anne, especially, for her refusal to help, by marrying Butler, to create a loyal party in the Irish Pale. He was on bad terms, indeed, with nearly all his family; for, apart from other grounds, he had abandoned and betrayed the political principles of the House of Norfolk.

That the head of so great a family should be thwarted by a girl of a lower branch of it was an offence which his position as chief enabled him to make her feel in many ways. But Anne was resolved not to marry by command, and chose rather to leave England, and live with the archduchess Marguerite, daughter of the late German emperor, Max, who had invited her to do so. Here, at Mechlin, she was free from the persecution of Wolsey and of her uncle Norfolk, and was hailed as the light and charm of the Flemish court. "I find in her," wrote Marguerite to Anne's father, "so pure a spirit, and so perfect an address for a lady of her years, that I am more beholden to you for sending her than you can be to me for receiving her."

A year passed, and things looked brighter at home, so that Anne could return; and hence, in 1526, she was once more at Hever. Her father, now Viscount Rochford, was with her, and was honoured soon after her return by a visit from Henry. He had seen her before, in 1522, and from that time had begun to heap honours on her father, but now he seems to have fallen definitely in love with her. Her wit, her modesty, her smile, her innocence, and her shining eyes fairly won him; so that on his return to London he spoke of her as having "the soul of an angel, and a spirit worthy of a crown." Wolsey, full of dreams of a French marriage for Henry, when the divorce from Catherine was obtained—a marriage which would bind England

and France together, and make himself and his schemes supreme in Christendom—insinuated that marriage with Anne was not to be thought of, but that a prince could do as he liked with women's hearts, without marrying. A priest and would-be reformer this! Henry, now coarsening every day, acted on Wolsey's hints, but Anne met his advances by telling him that "she did not understand them. She could not be his wife and would never be his mistress." The answer completed her victory. Henry would, henceforth, have none for queen but a soul so pure and so brave.

Dreaming of nothing beyond a shameful intrigue, Wolsey readily helped the king to meet his new lady-love, and brought them together at feasts and dances in his London palace of York Place. Henry was not to make her his, however, for seven long years, and, to his honour, he proved willing to wait. His life had grown lewd and immoral, but Anne's chasteness awed him, and kept him true to her. His letters to her were those of one foolishly in love, but she did not encourage his suit. Her heart had not forgotten Percy. Her father, a good man, her uncle Norfolk, and the whole circle in which she moved, thought the king free to marry again if he chose, and endless dreams of ambition turned on his choosing Anne. Norfolk would be in Wolsey's place, and Anne's father be made a duke. Amidst all this, however, Anne bore herself so discreetly, that even Catherine took no offence at her. She never thought of her as a possible rival, and admired her for her virtue, when so many other court ladies had shown so little.

In 1526, Henry's illegitimate son, the Duke of Richmond, was a bright and healthy boy of seven—his very health and brightness estranging his father more than ever from Catherine, with whom he had not lived since 1524. This and the new passion for Anne Boleyn led at last to his taking active steps towards a divorce. In the summer of 1526 the question was for the first time brought before the Pope with all possible secrecy, but it was found to be almost hopeless to get a favourable decision.

Wolsey had discussed the subject with the king for many months back, and this was his first scheme, which thus conspicuously failed.[1]

The laws of marriage had become so vague and uncertain in these times, by the extension of the Canon Law on the one hand, and the ready granting of dispensations for money on the other, that no divorce seemed beyond possibility, and most could be had as a mere matter of business. The tangled casuistry then prevalent regarding marriage and divorce, as shown in the Summa of Aquinas, Henry's special favourite, is indeed simply bewildering,[2] and not only made it easy for Church lawyers to find a canonical flaw in almost any marriage, but threw the legitimacy of every marriage into doubt. It was not till Cranmer had drawn up and incorporated in a statute, in 1533, the "Table of Kindred and Affinity, wherein whosoever are related are forbidden in Scripture and our Laws to marry together," that even the most honest couple could really know whether their union was legal or not; and this Table remains in our Bibles and Church Services, with its thirty prohibited degrees, as a proof of the confusion and difficulty it was intended to remove.

The dispensing power of the Pope had been abused to legalize marriages even of aunts and nephews. Pre-contracts, long kept secret, were admitted as valid pleas to annul marriages which had passed as legal for years. Divorces were often granted on the most scandalous and frivolous pretexts. Henry's favourite, the Duke of Suffolk, had actually a wife living when he married the king's sister, Mary, and to prevent objections on that ground to the legitimacy of his children, he obtained a Bull, years after, from Clement VII., who would not free Henry. To that previous wife, moreover, he had been first betrothed, when

[1] Brewer's State Papers of Henry VIII.'s reign, Vol. iv., No. 1729, and others.

[2] See the Summa Theologiæ (ed. 1671), 194 ff., where 117 different cases of conscience regarding marriage are discussed.

he married a second lady, whom he afterwards divorced on the ground of the pre-contract, after which he was married to her whom he had before deserted. Henry's sister, Margaret of Scotland, obtained a divorce from Angus, her second husband, on the frivolous pretence that her former husband, James IV., might have survived the battle of Flodden, and have been alive when she married again; and being thus set free, she took a third husband more to her taste.[1] There was, therefore, nothing in Henry's proposal to divorce Catherine that could shock the public opinion of the age, or hinder the Pope from granting a dispensation on moral grounds. Two difficulties only stood in the way. It would require the cancelling of a previous Papal dispensation, and it would expose the Pope to the anger of Catherine's nephew, Charles, who had even his person at his mercy.

The scheme of a secret dispensation having failed, Wolsey and Warham invented a seemingly easier course. In May, 1527, Henry was summoned before Wolsey, as Papal Legate—of course, with his own consent—to answer the charge of living in an unlawful union with his brother Arthur's widow, for eighteen years. The king read a reply to Wolsey's mock indictment, and asked leave to name a proctor in further proceedings. The court was then adjourned, on the plea that time was needed to consult with learned bishops, divines, and lawyers; but, of course, it had been pre-arranged that judgment should be given against the king, commanding him to put away Catherine as not his lawful wife. The whole proceedings had been intended to have been absolutely secret, but, unfortunately for their success, Catherine got word of them presently, and the scheme not only, like the former one, utterly failed, but led to Henry's distrust of Wolsey, on suspicion of his having told the queen. Nothing remained but to refer to the Pope openly.[2]

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[1] *Church Quarterly*, iii. 314.

[2] The whole conspiracy is revealed by Prof. Brewer, in his Introduction to his fourth volume of State Papers, just published.

Wolsey's long reign was at last drawing to a close. The outcry against him, which had hitherto been unheeded by Henry, was now for the first time listened to. His arrogance, his erection of a despotism in place of the old liberties of England, and his abuse of his legatine commission, had incited clergy and laity of all ranks against him, and Henry was ready to sacrifice him to the clamour, now that he had taken offence at him; but he granted him a respite for the time, on receiving the bribe of his new palace of Hampton Court, accompanied with professions of the deepest contrition.

War was now raging furiously between France and Charles, in Italy. The French king had been taken prisoner after the battle of Pavia, in 1525, and though ransomed by the intercession of Henry, had had to submit to such hard conditions that hostilities had broken out again at once. In 1527, Rome was taken and sacked by a Spanish army, with unspeakable horrors; and for the time Charles seemed the deadly enemy of the Pope, and France his friend. Henry stood true to Francis, in this belief, in which Wolsey shared, for Cavendish saw him "weeping tenderly" at the Pope's danger.[1] Charles was apparently aiming at universal monarchy, and fighting to promote the hated Lutheran Reformation. War with Charles, and alliance with France, seemed the only hope for the Church. The Spanish alliance was, therefore, finally broken off by Wolsey, and a new treaty made with France, at once for political and religious motives.

It was in the midst of the wild confusion of all Christendom at an event so astounding as Charles's storming of Rome, that Catherine's affairs were first brought before the Pope. She was now forty-two, and all hope of children had ceased. Henry was thirty-six. Henry had not lived with her, as her husband, since 1524. She was cold and reserved, as she grew older, and more embittered. A marriage begun in craft, on her side, had ended

[1] Cavendish's Wolsey, 77.

as might have been expected. His father, on his death-bed, had charged Henry not to marry her.[1] Warham had declared the marriage incestuous, and a large party supported him. It seemed, indeed, as if even Providence held it so, for the curse denounced on such unions had blighted his hopes, and threatened to entail hideous disaster on the nation at his death. Nearly all the bishops had declared against it. Application was therefore made to Rome for a Bull pronouncing it invalid, and Wolsey backed the application by carrying over £240,000, equal to nearly three millions now, to France, to be paid as a ransom for the Pope's liberty. With such a bribe he made sure he would forthwith get all that he wanted—and then, in league with France, with a new English queen, and the succession established, what vistas did not open!

Unfortunately for these nice calculations, Pope Clement escaped in December 1527, and was free to weigh at his leisure the proposal to pronounce the marriage void. To say that a former Pope had erred was next to impossible. Nor would it better affairs to make known that the bull authorizing the marriage had been stolen by Catherine's mother, and had never been published by the Pope. It had at least been signed by him. Clement, like his predecessors, had been infinitely obliged to Henry, but England was far away, and Charles was close at hand; with Rome, as had been only too terribly shown, in his power. The bull asked was clearly not to be granted if possible, for, in any case, it would bring trouble. Meanwhile, the Roman lawyers had the faculty of infinite delay.

Since the Pope could not be brought summarily to annul the act of his predecessor, and the case must be tried on its own merits, the great aim of Henry was to have it gone into as soon as possible. For this end, since he would on no account think of going to Rome to plead, strong pressure was put on Clement to appoint a legatine court which should sit in London, and

[1] Morrison's Apomaxis, 13.

there grant the divorce desired; and at last he was brought to appoint Campeggio—whom Henry had named, thinking he could count on his support as he had been heavily bribed—and Wolsey—to hear and determine the suit. Campeggio had been appointed Bishop of Salisbury, and Henry had given him a gift of a palace in Rome and lent him money. But though a cardinal he had children to support, and no principle to check his using any means to do so; and hence, before leaving for England he had sold himself to the emperor. But it was not easy, even when the Commission had been granted, to get Clement to act on it. He implored that it should not be published till Charles's German and Spanish army had left, and at last sent Campeggio, with secret instructions that the trial was to be only a form, leaving the whole matter unsettled. Yet nothing was omitted which could deceive Henry for the time. The legate brought with him the long wished-for bull declaring the marriage with Catherine void, but it was on no account to be shown except to Henry himself and Wolsey. "If it were shown," said the Pope, "he would be ruined, and he grieved much that he had granted it. He was undone for ever, if it came to the Emperor's ears." He might, indeed, well be, for Charles had threatened to set him aside from the papal throne as a bastard, if he dared grant it.

Campeggio was directed to delay as long as he could on his journey to London, in the hope that some escape from even the mockery of a trial might be found in the interval, and he was further directed to try to make an arrangement with Catherine in private, before going any further, when he reached London. But his efforts in this direction were, as might have been expected, fruitless.

When at last it was inevitable that the court must sit, every one felt that a crisis in the history of England had come. If the divorce were granted, it would secure Henry's loyalty to Rome, and with it the continuance of the existing relations between England and the Papacy. If it were refused, the

refusal would inaugurate a revolution. "If justice be denied," said Wolsey to Campeggio in a preliminary interview, "two things will happen. I will fall, and when I fall the power of the Pope will vanish from the land. Beware, most reverend lord," he repeated, again and again, "lest England be driven to follow in the wake of Germany. A cardinal estranged the Germans from the Holy See. Let it not be said that another cardinal has caused another loss. Unless this marriage is annulled, the authority of Rome is gone."

Meanwhile, the long delay of the negotiations, the apparent trifling with the king, and anxiety respecting the succession, were spreading a wide excitement, and tumults seemed likely. Catherine, unyielding and formal, had announced that she would take no steps without consulting the emperor, her nephew. Threats of withdrawal from connection with Rome began to be made, but they only deepened the confusion. Campeggio's private life created scandal at his scruples on the ground of morality. Bribery, intrigue, and vileness of every kind marked the legal preparations. Society in all ranks was intensely agitated. Wolsey was "ready to give his life, rather than let the king's business fall through."

The legate's court was at length opened at Blackfriars, on the last day of May, 1529, but the first step in the proceedings brought home to all minds the inconsistency of such a court being held at all. The voice of the crier summoning Henry, King of England, to appear before two priests acting for a foreign authority shocked the national pride. The spectacle of an English king and queen cited to appear, like common persons, before a court in their own realm was felt as an indignity offered, in their persons, to the crown. But as nothing was intended to be done, an adjournment was announced, after a few formal proceedings, till June 18th, when Catherine appeared in person, and appealed to Rome, denying the competence of the legates to try her case. This was excuse enough for a fresh adjournment, but the farce could not be hurried to an end.

Proceedings were, therefore, stayed till October 11th, on the pretext that the court could not sit in London during the legal vacation at Rome. Before that day the Pope had sent a formal command, for which Campeggio had been waiting all along, to transfer the whole case forthwith to Rome. In pursuance of this, Campeggio issued a summons requiring Henry to appear in Rome before the Roman lawyers, within forty days, and then declared the court broken up.

The excitement was tremendous, for the end that had been dreaded had come, and it was felt that a revolution had been inaugurated. Henry's monstrous self-will that swept everything from its path was not likely to submit to the arrogant demand to appear as a party to a suit in an Italian court, or to let itself be thwarted. "If his Grace should at any time come to Rome," wrote Wolsey, "it would be with such an army royal as should be formidable both to the Pope and to all Italy."[1] All classes were indignant at the affront offered to the Crown, and even those most loyal to the doctrines of Rome were ready for any assertion of the national independence of all foreign jurisdiction in their king's affairs.

The first to feel the shock was Wolsey. With such a master the one condition of favour was success, and his policy had ignominiously failed. The burden of the whole case had been laid on him, and by his advice Henry had submitted himself to all this humiliation, only to find himself mocked before Europe. Past services had no weight in a breast that knew no gratitude, and had been taught, even by Wolsey himself, that his subjects existed only for his royal pleasure. His great minister was of no further use and must be sacrificed, if only to give some vent to the fury roused by his failure and its results.

It was easy to ruin him, for, as in Henry VII.'s day, the judges were always ready to carry out the royal will, by inventing crimes, if necessary, or by fining and imprisoning juries if

[1] State Papers, vii. 193.

they were not sufficiently docile.[1] No sooner had the court been adjourned, on the last day of July, than he was dismissed from waiting on Henry, who never saw him again. All parties at once united to press him to his fall. Suffolk had cried out in court when Campeggio had finally adjourned it, that "it was never merry in England while we had cardinals amongst us," and Anne's friends were no less bitter. The attorney-general was therefore instructed to proceed against him, and drew up an indictment which was the ideal of injustice. He was accused of having procured bulls from Rome to act as legate, although he had done so with the knowledge and assistance, and for the service of the king, who used the office to widen the area of his growing despotism, and he had acted on them for years under his eye. Henry had, indeed, himself, solicited the legateship for his then favourite, and had shared the profits it brought. But the shameless wickedness of such a charge weighed little with such a master. There were, perhaps, special irritations of the moment to make him furious. Copies of letters of Wolsey, procured from Rome, had been brought to London, showing that, in his desperation, the falling man had made proposals of his own to the Pope, unknown to Henry.[2] In any case, he was undone.

Two bills were suddenly filed in the Court of King's Bench, on the opening day of the Michaelmas Term, charging him with having exercised legatine authority in England contrary to law; and, knowing with whom he had to do, he pleaded guilty, and threw himself for mercy at Henry's feet. On the 17th of October he was required to surrender the Great Seal, which was given to Sir Thomas More, for the king had had enough of priests. The catastrophe unmanned him. "Any one," says Cavendish, "would pity him. His tears and words fail him. He is willing to leave all, if only the king were not against him."[3]

[1] Bacon's Henry VII. Works iii. 404.
[2] Cavendish, 151—106.
[3] Ibid. 156.

One step now quickly followed another. An inventory of his plate and furniture, worth half a million in our money, was ordered, and all was seized, he himself being ordered to go to his house at Esher. To complete his ruin, Norfolk, his enemy, became President of the Council, and Suffolk Vice-President—the posts nearest the king. The people expected him to be sent to the Tower, and rejoiced at his fall. In February he received a general pardon, but was ordered to retire to York, where, as archbishop, he won golden opinions by his affability and lowliness, so much in contrast with his past characteristics. But his popularity, through this, was his ruin, for his enemies at Court, fearing he would once more regain dangerous influence, had him arrested, by Henry's orders, in November, 1530, and he died, worn out and broken hearted, at Leicester, on his way to London, where doubtless his master would have given him up without a second thought. Only his death saved him from the scaffold.

CHAPTER X.

ENGLAND DECLARED FREE FROM ROME.

THE fall of Wolsey, in 1529, had marked the beginning of a revolution which the citation of the king to Rome had inaugurated, but it remained to be seen how far it would be carried. Nor was expectation kept long in suspense. A week after the Great Seal had been taken from the Cardinal it was given, for the first time in men's memory, to a layman—Sir Thomas More—who thus became Speaker of the Upper House. The charge on which Wolsey had been crushed had, moreover, finally established the secular courts as supreme over Church as well as State, and had, at last, settled for ever the long struggle on this point between England and Rome. That the test case which decided this should have been that of a prince of the Church, acting as legate of the Pope, of itself precluded future vacillation. That the Pope henceforth had thus no more jurisdiction in England than any other foreign prince was itself a momentous reform.

Another step in the revolution soon followed, in the calling of Parliament, which had not sat since 1523. The fallen minister had kept the royal exchequer supplied by loans and "benevolences" as tyrannical as those of Henry VII.; not caring to meet the Commons, which had so roughly thwarted his wishes at its last meeting. But Henry felt that he was now the master. The concentration in one hand of such vast

power as had been held by Wolsey had prepared the people for still further advances towards absolutism, by the king. His despotism was now at last thoroughly organized, and the ease with which he had smitten down Wolsey showed him that any one who opposed him lay helplessly at his mercy. He intended to begin a reign of terror, and to use Parliament as his servile tool in carrying it out. His personal character had been no less changed than all else by the crisis. Henceforward all the constitutional safeguards of English freedom were to be brushed aside like spiders' webs. King-worship was to reign. Boundless selfishness and monstrous self-will were to trample under foot all that opposed them in Church and State. Arbitrary taxation, arbitrary legislation, arbitrary imprisonments, were to become the rules of government, and the lives of the noblest in the land were to hang on a royal word. But, happily, these things were for the most part hidden as yet. For the present, the helpless servility of the new Parliament was sufficiently shown by its meekly cancelling the king's debts, though secured under the Great Seal.

But its other proceedings showed at once the advancement in public opinion on ecclesiastical matters in the last few years. More, as a friend of the New Learning, was in favour of correcting the most prominent abuses in the state of the Church, but was even more zealous in his dread of any doctrinal changes. He had nothing good to say of his predecessor, who was "a great wether, that had most craftily, scabbedly, and untruly juggled the king;" and it would have fared ill with the cardinal but for the bold fidelity of Thomas Cromwell, who for some years back had been in his service, and was destined to be the foremost man, under the king, in the great changes impending. No fewer than thirty-five charges were brought against Wolsey, on each of which Cromwell vigorously defended him, with such success that the impeachment virtually broke down. The daring advocate had no doubt learned that the king did not as yet feel it safe to take the life of a cardinal of the Church while the

future was so uncertain, else such boldness would have been merely suicidal. The Archbishopric of York had been left to the fallen man, and at the demand of his enemy he was banished to it. But his spirit was utterly broken, and his strength exhausted by his tremendous labours when in power. A few months passed in quiet obscurity were now all that remained to him.

Meanwhile the Revolution advanced amain. Convocation had been once and again summoned during the past years to discuss the reforms which all felt necessary, but, even with Wolsey at its head, nothing could be done. Now, however, under More, Parliament took the subject into its own hands, thus quietly assuming what the bishops and clergy so vigorously challenged, that the Church no less than the State was under its control. The Commons drew up a petition to the king, complaining that the clergy made laws in Convocation, without the king's assent or that of the people; that the procedure of Church courts was oppressive; that ecclesiastical patronage was abused, and that the number of holy days was too great. Henry referred the petition to the Upper House of Convocation, but it would do nothing. The Commons, however, were determined to go on, and passed statutes reducing greatly the fees of the Church lawyers on probates of wills, and the claims for mortuaries, which had excited so much attention in the case of Hunne. The clergy were further prohibited from engaging in trade, which they had hitherto largely done. A statute was also passed against pluralities, and to enforce residence, but it had too many exceptions to be of much effect. The rights of Convocation were left till a future opportunity.

It was still, however, the day for half measures, and the acts against non-residence and pluralities were too weak to do much good. The Church was as yet too powerful, or the laity too remiss. All clergy of the King's Council might hold three benefices; all chaplains of any member of the royal family might hold two; and this abuse was permitted also to all

chaplains of the nobility or of bishops, and to some others as well. All clergy attending Court, or in the suite of such as were licensed to have chaplains, and all pilgrims, in the time of going or returning, might be non-resident. No wonder that a writer of the time cries out, "O Lord, where was the light of thy Word, which should have been written on the hearts of the makers of that statute?"[1] Unhappily the abuse was allowed to linger till within the last forty years; but, in our day, the Church is, at last, freed from it.

The fact that the Commons had thus legislated on ecclesiastical reforms was felt to mark a new departure in the great struggle between the Church and the people. Henceforward it was evident that the State intended to be supreme. Yet there was no dream of hostility to any received doctrines, but rather the desire to strengthen the Church by freeing it from palpable abuses. So zealous were the Commons, indeed, in their orthodoxy, that Fisher, the aged bishop of Rochester,—a warm friend of Erasmus, and, as such, a patron of the New Learning, but none the less an intensely conservative Churchman—had to apologise for expressions apparently reflecting on them, in a speech delivered against their daring to legislate on ecclesiastical matters. The quarrel between the laity and the Church had at last broken out, and was never to be healed.

It was in June, 1529, while the Legatine Court yet seemed to promise a settlement of his divorce, that the king, moving from place to place, to flee from the terrible plague known as the "Sweating Sickness," which had broken out once more at Court, heard of Thomas Cranmer. He was now thirty-nine, and had hitherto spent his life at Cambridge. There he had fallen under the influence of Bilney, and was one of the band of rising men who felt that more was needed than a merely superficial Church reform. It speaks well for his morals that,

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[1] A Supplycacion to Our Most Soveraigne Lord King Henry VIII. 1544.

in an age when the gentlemen and farmers of a whole county, in an address to the king, were accusing the clergy of the systematic seduction of their wives and daughters;[1] when the Church authorities were denouncing in vain the immorality of their brethren;[2] and when even Wolsey, like Antonelli in our day, had his mistresses, Cranmer vindicated a purer life by a lawful marriage. He chose, say Strype and Foxe,[3] a gentleman's daughter; gave up his fellowship, and read the Common Lecture at Buckingham—now Magdalen College—but, his wife dying in the first year, the master and fellows re-elected him fellow, and he remained in Cambridge as such. His character had, therefore, suffered nothing by his marriage, a fact which, of itself, refutes the slander against his wife. Nor was private marriage unknown even in the higher ranks of the Church in those days, for Archbishop Warham himself was a married man. Cranmer had entered Jesus College in 1503, when a boy of fourteen, and had been elected a fellow seven years later. It was in 1514, when Anne Boleyn had gone first to France, that he gave up his fellowship on his marriage; he was then twenty-three. Regaining it next year, he held it thenceforward, refusing to resign it for a better position, offered him nine years later, in 1524, by Wolsey. In 1523, when he was thirty-four, he had been made Doctor of Divinity, and was appointed Divinity Reader in his own college, and Examiner for degrees in Divinity, and these offices he held in 1529.

In September of that year the plague broke out in Cambridge, and Cranmer went on a visit to a relative of his late wife, Mr. Cressy, at Waltham Cross, a village in Hertfordshire. While there, Henry happened to come the same way, and his secretaries, Gardiner and Fox, lodged in the same mansion with Cranmer. The controversy respecting the divorce was at its

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[1] See Froude, i. 96.

[2] See Cardinal Morton's Address to the Clergy. Wilkins, iii. 619.

[3] Memorials, 1848, i. 3. Foxe, viii. 4.

height, and Cranmer freely expressed himself on the king's side, and gave it as his opinion that Henry should no longer trouble himself with seeking the Pope's sanction, but should, instead, ask that of the different universities of Europe. It was, at best, a clumsy expedient, but the true course—of deciding the matter in England—was not hit upon till years later.

On hearing the conversation repeated, Henry forthwith ordered Cranmer to put his opinions in writing, and a book was the result, in which it was laid down that the relation to Catherine was in itself sinful and offered nothing to annul, but left the king free to marry at once. Such a marriage as his had been, Cranmer held, could not be defended. No Pope could dispense with a prohibition of Scripture. He even added, in his simplicity, that he was ready to go to Rome and argue the question before the Pope. Meanwhile, the universities should be consulted and the king should act on their decision, which must be for him.

Erelong, Cranmer was sent on a fruitless errand to argue the matter at Rome, and, soon after, was busy getting the University Senates to give their opinions. In the course of 1530, nine, by one means or other—not always honourable, perhaps, on either side—had given their verdict in the king's favour. Oxford and Cambridge, the strongholds of the old faith, were loath to condemn a Pope, and struggled hard to say nothing. But they had their master in Henry, supported by Gardiner, Bonner, and others, and they had, reluctantly, to vote the marriage illegal. It was known that the Pope had interdicted Henry from marrying while the divorce question was unsettled, and though the bull could not find entry to England it stirred the indignation of people and king alike, that a stranger should thus interfere, and yet refuse to go further in a matter so grave.

In January, 1531, Parliament was again convened, and a hundred writings from the Universities were laid before it on the king's side—Catherine, on hers, being no less active. Thus

for the first time in English history both king and queen appealed through the press to the people. The churches, the walls, the gates, were covered with bills, in vindication of the king's cause, and books and pamphlets were circulated through the country in support of both sides. All the men were for the king, all the women for the Pope and Catherine. Nothing else was talked of. All the bishops except Fox had declared for Henry. The universities of England and Europe, either freely or otherwise, had endorsed his wishes. A rumour passed along the benches of the two Houses that the Pope was threatening to excommunicate every one who supported his desire for a divorce. Forthwith this threat was met by threats in return. A letter of remonstrance to the Pope was signed by the primate and archbishop, dukes, earls, prelates, barons, abbots, knights, and commoners, declaring that England would separate from Rome if justice were not done, and that if Rome would not do it, they would get it by other means. Yet the result seemed as far off as ever. But at last the brain was found which solved the difficulty—that of Thomas Cromwell.

This man, destined to affect English history so powerfully, was of a good English stock—the Cromwells of Lincolnshire. A member of the family—likely a younger son—had moved up to London, and conducted an iron-foundry, or other business of that description, at Putney.[1] He married the sister of a Derbyshire gentleman; but on his death she remarried a cloth merchant, and Thomas, the child of the first marriage, left his stepfather's home to seek his fortune. He had received a good education, and was known afterwards as a man of learning, but he seems to have fared roughly for a time in his early wanderings. It is said that he was in Italy with the French army; but he returned to England while still young; married a wool-merchant's[2] only daughter and heiress, became a partner, and, as his will, written in 1529, shows, amassed a considerable fortune.

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[1] Froude, i. 583. [2] Sir John Prior, Knight.

Some chance bringing him into contact with Wolsey, we find him in 1525 employed by him to visit and sequestrate the small monasteries intended to furnish an endowment for the cardinal's new college, and he continued with him till his fall.

His character has of course been bitterly assailed by Romanists and their allies the Ritualists, but to the frankness with which he depreciates his earlier life, speaking of himself, like John Bunyan, as a "ruffian," he adds that "by learning without book," that is, by heart, "the New Testament of Erasmus, in Latin, he began to be touched and called to better understanding." How honestly and truly he served Wolsey shows the nobility of his nature and his solid worth. He went with him to the damp unfurnished house at Esher, to which he had been ordered to betake himself, trying to soften his troubles as best he might. When Parliament met, the Lords had passed a bill of impeachment against his master which threatened his life, but Cromwell, who was a member of the Lower House, having taken counsel with him, rode off from Esher in a cheerless November night, to attend in his place in Parliament on his behalf. There he took up the articles of the impeachment, one by one, and answered them, riding down to Esher in the evening to receive instructions for the next day. Braving alike king, government, and public feeling, his fidelity knew no selfish fear, and in the end saved Wolsey, and even got him many comforts which he had hitherto sorely wanted. No wonder Cavendish says that "at the length his honest estimation and earnest behaviour in his master's cause grew so in every man's opinion, that he was reputed the most faithful servant to his master of all other, wherein he was of all men greatly commended."[1] Brought into constant contact with the Duke of Norfolk, the President of the Council, in the management of Wolsey's case, much government business of various kinds was put in his hands, and his management of it

[1] Cavendish, 180.

was such that "the fame of his honesty and wisdom coming to the king,"[1] led to his being taken into his service, and almost at once appointed king's secretary, representing the Government in the House of Commons.

To Cromwell is to be attributed, from that time to his death, the principles embodied in the public policy, ecclesiastical and political. His fundamental conception of government was that Church and State were only different aspects of the whole community, and that there should, therefore, be only one source of authority and law for both. Like Cranmer, and apparently at one time even Gardiner, he held that the king, like the Russian Czar of our own times, united in his person the supreme ecclesiastical and temporal dignity, and that he might, by the authority divinely given him, make a priest as readily as a lay official, with no need of any ordination whatever. A bishop held his commission only during the pleasure of the Crown, and it was at once cancelled when the sovereign who had given it died. The Church was, in fact, only a department of the public service, maintained to discharge the religious duties prescribed by the State. It was by one holding such views that the Church of England, as it is to-day, was called into being.

After the failure of the attempt to settle the question of the divorce at the Legate's Court in London, the dispute between Henry and the Pope grew, month by month, more embittered. It was certain that the king would never give way, and ever more and more certain that terror of Charles made it impossible that the Pope could act freely. The head of Christendom had become merely the creature of the emperor, and dared not oppose him. Meanwhile threats were not wanting on both sides, and Henry, on his, was not slow at once to prepare for the worst, and to show what might be expected if his demand were refused.

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[1] Cavendish, 199.

Wolsey had fallen, but the Church, in its venerable and gigantic power, might, at any time, turn against the Government, or even against the throne, and overthrow it. The opposition Henry could offer to the arrogant claim of the Pope to summon him and Catherine to Rome was in danger of being paralyzed at any moment if the Church were not humbled. But this was presently done most effectually. In January, 1531, six weeks after Wolsey's death, Convocation was informed that all the clergy had become liable to the penalties of premunire by having made use of Wolsey's legatine courts, or by recognizing them, and had forfeited all their livings and goods to the king. It was a most audacious stroke, and had no foundation in justice. But it served a good end. The Pope had dared England; and Wolsey's fall had been the first reply, while this was the second. After such a blow the Papal party could less easily dominate the crown and the nation, and the Church learned, once for all, what the whole history of England had vainly striven to impress on it, that the clergy were citizens, under the law, like others.

But this was only another step in the advancing revolution; a third, far more momentous was to follow. It had been the view of the New Learning, and had come to be that of a large party in the nation, that the true solution of the difficulties in which the king found himself, was, that he should assume the supremacy over the Church in England which had hitherto been held by the Pope. Except by Wolsey and Warham, and perhaps a few others, it was thought possible for the National Church thus to separate itself from the unity of the Church Universal, and at the same time to remain "Catholic," with no innovation or change of doctrine. It was fancied that faith in the Romanist system of priest and sacrament could still be maintained apart from submission to the Chair of St. Peter; the clergy ministering as the direct servants of the State, and responsible to it alone. This was the English theory, handed down from William Rufus, the second Henry, and the Edwards,

for it lay at the root of the struggle against Papal Supremacy that had marked reign after reign.

Henry had, doubtless, seen that things were drifting in this direction, and had cast off Wolsey, partly, it is probable, because he felt that he could not be of use in the altered policy into which England was to be led. He was as able, as he was overbearing and self-willed. Even the subtleness of the schoolmen in which he had been trained, and their appeal to Aristotle as their great master, must have awakened in him, as it had done in others, a sense of rivalry to popes and priests. The masters of the Roman law had led him in the same track of independent thought, and the New Learning, however undesignedly, had set up reason as the opponent of priestly authority. Above all, the Council of Constance had shaken the power of the papacy to the foundation, by claiming power over the Popes, for the Church assembled in such a conclave.

Nor were examples of independence wanting even in the royalty of the day. The Emperor Maximilian had leaned to the new order of things. The good Elector of Saxony openly supported Luther; Denmark had thrown off the yoke of Rome in 1522; and Sweden, under Gustavus Vasa, had followed in the same course in 1526.

Still, to a mind like that of Henry, blindly devoted to the doctrines of the Church, separation from Rome must have seemed most momentous. It might destroy religious faith, shake the foundations of society, and bring in an anarchy like that which had reigned so recently in the peasant wars of the Continent.

But he had gone too far to draw back, and having found in Cromwell the instrument he needed, he left it to him to guide the revolution, careless whether he could outride the storm or perish in his task, so that his own ends were gained. An ardent believer in the old English theory, Cromwell had told him, soon after Wolsey's fall, that the only escape from the difficulties of the divorce-question was by his assuming, himself,

the supremacy over the Church instead of the Pope, and deciding the matter in his own Ecclesiastical Court in England. Henry had shrunk from so bold a step, at the time, but the protracted delays at Rome, and the hopelessness of any settlement from the Pope while so completely in the power of the Emperor, drove him at last to adopt it. It was, therefore, forthwith demanded that Convocation should formally recognize the King's supremacy over the Church—and the demand was submitted to with the verbal qualification that it was conceded only so far as the law of Christ allowed. It depended on the docility of the clergy in this matter, how far the terrible penalties of premunire should be enforced. The Southern Convocation, after bitter opposition, succumbed on the 11th February, and passed the hated acknowledgment in silence—Warham presiding : that of York yielded on May 4th, Tunstal, Bishop of Durham, protesting. In principle, it was nothing new that had been thus achieved, but, for the first time, the Church itself had been forced to accept, by a formal act, what England had always demanded and practically enforced.

As the reward of this concession a compromise for their pretended offences was granted the clergy. The province of Canterbury was pardoned on paying £100,000 to the king, and that of York, on paying £18,000—each sum worth, then, twelve times as much. The king had filled his coffers, and even the laity were pleased to see the Church fleeced at last, after its centuries of extortion. Only the peasantry, whom it had bound to it by superstition and ignorance, stood faithful, and they could render no help.

Things were now rapidly coming to a crisis. In January, 1532, an envoy was once more sent to Rome with a letter from Henry and the opinions of the Universities on his marriage. But things had gone too far in England to make concessions palatable to the Court of Rome. The action of Henry had in effect repudiated the supremacy of the Pope, for if he claimed to be head of the Church in England, the country was by

that act separated from the Papacy. Nor did his imperious defiance of the Pope end even here. A bill was brought forward to stop the payment of annates to Rome, though its taking force was made conditional on the Pope's bearing towards the King. Convocation itself had moved first in this by a petition to Parliament for their abolition—for however loyal in doctrine to the Pope, their loyalty stopped short of submitting to taxation for his benefit. It might be that so mercenary a court as his would yield to such a threat. But he was powerless in the hands of Charles, and was looking to him, besides, for the restoration of Florence to his family, the Medici, and dared not affront him by reflecting on his aunt. Unfortunately, religious principle cannot be recognized as any ground of his hesitation, for it is of Clement that Guicciardini, a contemporary—in calling him a good Pope, adds the terrible words—"but I do not mean apostolic goodness, for in those days he was esteemed a good Pope who did not surpass other men in wickedness."

The answer to Henry's mission, and to the rough attacks on the Church which had been intended to enforce its being favourable, was what might have been expected: a fresh citation of the king and queen to Rome. To this there could be only one reply, and that Henry made:—that the King of England could not submit himself to any foreign jurisdiction.

In May, 1532, therefore, another step was taken, which completed the ecclesiastical revolution, and made the Church of England what it has been ever since. In 1529 the Commons had petitioned Henry to take from Convocation the power of making laws without his assent, but action in the matter had hitherto been stayed. The clergy had fiercely resented the attack then made: had claimed the authority of Scripture and the Church for their legislative powers, and had declared that they "could not submit the execution of their charge and duty, certainly prescribed by God," to the king's assent. They had even told the Commons that the canons or Church laws were made by the authority of God and were perfectly agreeable to

His will, so that if they on any points clashed with the law of the land it was fitting that that law should be changed so as to bring it into conformity with theirs. So far is it from being the case, as some have asserted, that the Church anticipated the State in submission to its authority. But the day for such lordly airs was past. "Submission" to the king was now demanded, with the surrender of all independent power; the abandonment of the canon law in all particulars in which it differed from the law of the land; leaving Convocation itself to exist, henceforth, only as an ecclesiastical phantom, not only, as hitherto, requiring the Royal License to meet, but incapable of framing even a bye-law for the most vital necessities of morality or religion. The whole government of the Church was transferred to the Crown and Parliament; it was for them to enact and for the Church to obey. Even this was accepted by the terrified clergy; to be engrossed in an act, the year after.

To Henry as to the bulk of the educated Englishmen of his day this new ecclesiastical constitution was intended to leave the doctrinal system of the Church unaffected. England was to remain Romanist or "Catholic," as much as ever, though it had separated itself from the unity of Christendom. But some even then saw that an ecclesiastical revolt involved, inevitably, much more. They felt that the principle of independence could not stop at external organization; that union with the head of the Roman Church was essential to a retention of "Catholic" doctrine, since schism was itself a deadly sin. Nor could it be hoped that the people would stand still, even if the clergy wished to do so, or that they would tolerate in the paid servants of the State the arrogant claims of the priesthood of the past. Anglicanism, that is political independence of Rome, with doctrinal subjection, was intended by Henry and his contemporaries; but under Mary it broke down into conspicuous failure, and since then has shown itself more and more an anachronism and inconsistency which the nation will not tolerate when it obtrudes itself too much on its notice.

Henry intended separation only from the *Court*, not from the *Church* of Rome, but England repudiated both.

Things were now rapidly coming to a crisis. There was no hope of Catherine yielding, and as little of the Pope fulfilling his promise. Henry was at last losing patience, and he now had Cromwell at his side. While the clergy were writhing under the demand to annihilate Convocation, except as an idle show, he had written to Rome that the oath taken by the bishops made them only half his subjects, and the Commons echoing the feeling, had declared that if a rupture came, and bulls were refused for the consecration of bishops, they would do without them.

In July, 1531, Henry had finally separated from Catherine, after twenty years of wedded life, for the last seven of which, however, they had had separate rooms; and since then Anne Boleyn had been openly recognized as the queen elect.[1] In September, 1532, she was made Marchioness of Pembroke, with £1,000 a year in land, and in October, as a further bravado in defiance of the Pope, was taken over with the king to meet Francis at Calais, though no divorce had yet taken place. She would have been married before this but for the death of Warham, in August, and the delay in getting a successor. It was essential to obtain the necessary bulls from Rome before any open rupture, and they were therefore at once sent for, in favour of Cranmer, whom the king had chosen to the high office.

But the marriage was precipitated, after all, by the receipt of a bull from Rome in January, 1533, ordering Henry in the abruptest way to dismiss Anne forthwith from the court. A haughty spirit like his could ill brook such a crowning insult, and answered it by at once being privately married to Anne by Rowland Lee, one of his chaplains.[2] The act needed secrecy till the bulls for the archbishop's consecration were received.

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[1] Henry had for some time back required her to live at Court.

[2] Burnet gives the date Nov. 14, 1532; others, January 25, 1533.

These came at last, in the beginning of March, 1533; but before their arrival the ecclesiastical revolution had become absolute and final. In February, on the meeting of Parliament, the great step was taken of proclaiming independence of Rome, as a necessary preliminary to carrying out the divorce in an English court, as had been determined, by Cromwell's counsel. The action of Parliament, essential in any case in matters affecting the future of the kingdom, was supremely needful where the succession to the throne was involved, as in this question.

An Act was therefore introduced and passed in February, 1533, declaring that "the crown of England was imperial, and the nation a complete body in itself, with full power to do justice in all causes, spiritual and temporal." Appeals to Rome "had been found fruitful in expense and annoyance, and delay and miscarriage of justice." It was therefore enacted that all causes, whether they concerned the king or any of his subjects, were in future to be settled in England, notwithstanding any inhibitions or appeals to Rome; and any one procuring a bull hereafter was made liable to the penalties of the Law of Provisors.

Thus quietly at last fell, at one stroke, the mighty fabric of Papal usurpation, which had been slowly reared through centuries. With the supremacy transferred from the Pope to the King, Convocation stripped of all power, the "first-fruits" refused, and all appeals forbidden, there remained nothing to Rome. The results of so vast a change could not develop themselves at once, and have not, indeed, fully shown themselves even yet, but henceforth England entered on a new era of ecclesiastical and religious, and even of political life. The hideous incubus of priestly rule had been cast off for ever. Henceforth, liberty of thought in the heart, on the lips, and through the press, was secured; a principle so grand that generations had to pass away before its full meaning could be realized even by those most firm in its support.

More had already resigned the chancellorship in May, foreseeing the rupture with the Pope, and perhaps shocked at the overthrow of Convocation; and Cranmer, who had just come home from Germany when the marriage with Anne took place, knew nothing of it for a fortnight after. A prodigious excitement filled all minds, for the act was a blank defiance of the Pope, and a final rupture with Rome, which England, for a thousand years, had been led to regard as the organic centre of Christendom. Warham had died in August, and so was out of the coil for ever.

Thus, at the age of forty-two, Henry had at last broken with Rome, which not long before he had seemed the least likely of men to have left. But the conflict of Papal claims with his overgrown will, with his kingly instincts, and with the rights of the nation to manage its own affairs, had fortunately driven him to assert the national independence. Anne was already thirty-two.

One great object of the Statute of Appeals had doubtless been to neutralize the appeal of Catherine, and thus establish the competency of an English court to judge and settle the whole case; but it still remained necessary to annul the old marriage by a formal process, and for this an Archbishop of Canterbury was needed. A message had been sent to Germany, months before, that Cranmer should forthwith return and accept the dignity, but it found him sincerely unwilling, contact with the Continental Protestants having made him a Reformer in doctrine, as well as in Church politics; and he knew that Henry was still a bigoted Romanist. To take office over the Church, under such a king, was perilous to the uttermost. To use Fuller's words, Henry, as his character had developed latterly, seemed to combine the virtues and vices of all his predecessors from the Conquest—learning, wisdom, valour, magnificence; cruelty, avarice, fury, and lust.[1] Wolsey had changed the government into one of personal rule, and

[1] Fuller's Church History, ii. 9.

unbridled power had created a hideous self-will which demanded indulgence to its most lawless caprices, and knew no human pity if anything stood in its way.

It was as dangerous to refuse as to accept honours from such a master, and Cranmer had therefore returned slowly from Germany, where he had married a second time. Parliament had met in February, and, at the king's dictation or by his permission, had passed an Act against all appeals to Rome—urging their cost, delay, and thousand difficulties in citing witnesses, and personally attending at such a distance. In the end of January the king had sent to Rome for bulls to consecrate Cranmer, although an Act had been passed against doing so, and in due time eleven were received—the last that came to England under Henry.

But Cranmer was ill at ease in his new position. Warham had made a protest in private before his consecration,[1] and he resolved to show his uprightness by insisting on making one in public before allowing himself to be consecrated,[2] declaring that he only took the old oaths in a limited sense. The document was read not only in the chapter-house, before witnesses, but at the high altar, on his consecration, and again at the same place when he received the pall—a scarf sent by the Pope to archbishops. "It is not," said he, "either now or hereafter, my will or intention by any oath, however the words may read, to bind myself to anything which may be, or may seem to be, contrary to the Word of God or to the king, his kingdom, or prerogative, and I do not intend by this oath to bind myself in any way to speak, consult, or agree less freely than I otherwise would as regards the reformation of the Christian religion, or the government of the English Church, or the prerogative of the Crown, or to bar myself from reforming in everything what may seem to me to need reform in the Church of England." A right manly act, under such a master and at such a time!

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[1] Le Bas, Cranmer, i. 57.

[2] March 30, 1533.

Convocation was once more summoned, in April, 1533, to give its vote on the divorce, and, of course, decided for the king. It might have done so honestly enough, but the future was to show that it only gave a forced opinion. Yet it was hard to argue with a king who had the hangman in the background for any disobedience of his orders. The ground being thus in every way cleared, the last act in the tragedy closed in May. Convocation having solemnly voted at their sitting in April that the marriage with Catherine was invalid, Cranmer, with Stokesley, Bishop of London, Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester, Longland, Bishop of Lincoln, and a number of other prelates, held a court at Dunstable, within five miles of Catherine's house at Ampthill, and having duly summoned her, once and again, without reply, adjudged her contumacious, and pronounced[1] her marriage with the king as null and unlawful by Scripture. Reconciliation with Rome was henceforth impossible. A personal incident, by involving a principle, had freed England from it for ever.

But, although privately married to his new wife in the first of 1533, the interests at stake on the due publicity of the fact were too great to let Henry rest satisfied with that ceremony. The marriage was therefore repeated in public, on the 12th of April, and six weeks later the poor victim fancied that her fortune had reached an abiding splendour, for on the 28th May Cranmer confirmed her marriage by a judicial sentence, and on the 29th her coronation was heralded by gorgeous pageants and rejoicings, which culminated on the fourth day, Whit Sunday, in her wearing the crown as Queen of England. Well for her that she could not see through the mists of the next three years, with the headsman and his axe closing the perspective!

Meanwhile, the news of the divorce of Catherine and the marriage with Anne produced the fiercest indignation at Rome, and this was even heightened by Henry and Cranmer forwarding

[1] May 23, 1533.

two separate documents to the Pope, declining to own his authority, and appealing from him to a General Council—of all things the most hateful to the Papal mind. Sentence was forthwith pronounced by Clement, in conclave, denouncing excommunication with all its terrors against Henry if he did not revoke and cancel all that he had done, and declaring the divorce utterly ineffectual and void.

Strange to say, after all that had happened, Henry was prevailed upon by the French king to offer once more to leave his whole cause to the decision of the Roman consistory, and a courier was sent off with his formal submission, as if the divorce and the second marriage might yet possibly be recalled! But the fierceness of the extreme party at Rome defeated this last chance of the Pope's retaining England. The messenger had not arrived by the time they deemed sufficient for his journey, and they hurried through the consistory a resolution to publish the excommunication at once. Two days after the courier arrived, but it was now too late. The partizans of the Emperor would not permit the revocation of the sentence, and the rupture with England was left irreparable.

Henry's courier had been delayed by contrary winds, but, in the providence of God, it was to such an apparent accident that England was for ever freed from the rule of the priest!

CHAPTER XI.

THE FIRST MARTYRS.

THE flames of the Pope's bull at Wittenberg, in 1520, which were the signal-fire of the Reformation, were no less a fierce alarm to all interested in the maintenance of the established religious system.

English Lollardism, or Protestantism, had been driven into hiding in the last century, but it had never been rooted out, and now sprang up again with a persistency and increasing vigour which excited the bishops to the utmost. Preachers of the new doctrines—new in that age, but old as the New Testament—secretly spread them among the lower classes, who, having nothing to lose, and being more open, in their humble simplicity, to learn, are always foremost in great religious movements. Books of Wycliffe were passed, with cautious outlook, from hand to hand. But if the Gospellers were active, so were their enemies. In spite of the shame connected with the murder of Hunne, a great many were cited before the bishops between 1517 and 1520. In 1518 two men were burned in London, one for having some books of Wycliffe's; the other, who had already been before the bishop for having left a monastery to which he had been sent, was charged with having taken off the heretic's badge of a faggot, on his coat. His story was that doubtless of many. He had been one of the secret teachers of the Reformers, and had lived, at different

times, in various places, in furtherance of his godly work. At Newbury, in Berkshire, he had been minister in a lowly congregation, who for fifteen years had worshipped safely in secret, like the first Christians among the heathen. Being at last betrayed, however, several of their number were burned, and the rest cruelly punished. Escaping from this place, their minister had passed to Amersham, in Bucks, and taught a secret congregation there, till it, also, was dispersed. Still faithful, he was at last caught, and received his martyr's crown at Smithfield. "He confesses," says the bishop's register, "that he and and his wife have turned six or seven hundred people to those opinions."[1] What those opinions were the same authority informs us. "He affirmed that the very body and blood of Christ were not in the sacrament of the altar, but material bread and wine, and that he had received it at Easter as holy bread; that the crucifix and other images were not to be worshipped; that confession to a priest was of no effect; that the true Church was holy men;" and more to the same effect. It was for such "heresy" as this that the "English Catholic" Church burned God's saints, and this is the Church which the Ritualists would bring back on us. Buckingham and Berks each saw a man burned in 1518, but the bloodiest Auto da Fe was at Coventry. Six men and a widow woman were burned there in one great sacrifice to "Anglo-Catholicism"—the men, shoemakers, glovers, and the like—the crime of all being, that they had taught their children and servants the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments in English.[2]

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[1] Articles against Mann, quoted from the Registers, by Foxe, iv. 211.

Foxe, iv. 557. I add the following testimony to Foxe's exactness and veracity, in addition to that of Bishop Burnet, already given. "All the many researches and discoveries of later times, in regard to historical documents, have only contributed to place the general fidelity and truth of Foxe's melancholy narrative, on a rock which cannot be shaken." —Preface to Wordsworth's Eccles. Biography. His triumphant vindication

The wide spread of the simple doctrines of the New Testament among the common people in these years, at least in some parts of England, is strikingly shown in the registers of Bishop Longland, of Lincoln, in 1521. In his one diocese he managed to hunt up, in the year, nearly five hundred Gospellers, whom he worried in every way, as a warning to others. Prisoners were forced, on oath, to denounce their parents and households, their neighbours and friends, under penalty of they knew not what. The crimes imputed to them, were, in the main, that they did not believe in pilgrimages to shrines; that they objected to the adoration of the Virgin and other saints; that they refused to believe in the real presence of the flesh and blood of Christ in the wafer; and that they would not give up the reading of the Scriptures, or such fragments of them as they had, in English. For this, hundreds of English men and women were treated like the worst felons, and suffered more than a felon's punishment. For teaching a child the eight Beatitudes; for having read the Scriptures to a neighbour; for knowing the Ten Commandments; for repeating the words, "Blessed be they that hear the Word of God and keep it;" for saying, "What need is there to go to the feet, when we may go to the Head?" for carrying a godly book from one man to another; for "reading all night in a book of Scripture;" for tasting food on a fast-day; for saying that "true pilgrimage was to go barefoot and visit the poor, weak, and sick;" for buying an English Bible; for having been seen with "known-men;" for even so little as repeating the "story of Adam and Eve in Paradise," out of the hated Wycliffe Bible, men and women of blameless life were torn in numbers from their households and callings, and forced, even if they recanted, to wear the faggot-

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from the slander of the enemies of Protestantism, has lately received still further completeness in the Introduction, by the Rev. Dr. Stoughton, to the noble edition of "The Acts and Monuments," published by the Religious Tract Society in eight volumes.

badge on their clothes for life, or to suffer the fire if they stood firm. And this is the Church our "conspirators" wish to revive!

It was no light matter, indeed, to live in the diocese of Lincoln in those days, for Longland even got the king himself, in 1521, the year of the royal answer to Luther, to require "all mayors, sheriffs, bailiffs, and constables, as they tender his high displeasure, to aid, help, and assist the said Right Reverend Father in God, in hunting down the heretics in his diocese, of whom there is "no small number." The punishments accorded them when caught, even though they recanted, were to go thrice round the market on market day, and stand on the highest step of the cross there, for a quarter of an hour, with a faggot of wood on their shoulder; to go, in the same way, in a procession on Sunday; to bear a faggot at the burning of a heretic; to be branded with a red-hot iron on the cheek, and never, in any way, to hide the mark; with much besides, as the temper of the bishop or his chancellor at the moment decreed. All this, and more, is entered by Longland as the penance to be undergone by even the lightest offenders; and any failure to carry it out was to be counted a relapse, to be expiated by death at the stake.[1]

The year 1525 was famous in the history of the Reformation, by the outbreak of the terrible Peasant's War in Germany, in which a hundred thousand of the unhappy serfs were slain. Serfdom had passed away in England, thanks to the revolts of Wat Tyler and Jack Cade, which had been mainly fierce protests against it, and to the scarcity of labour through the slaughters of the long civil wars. But in Germany it continued in all its bitterness, without even the check of fixed rules of privilege on the part of the masters. Insurrection after insurrection had already been made against it. Switzerland had gained its freedom by the battle of Morgarten, in 1315. The

[1] Quoted from Longland's Register for 1521, fol 90—by Foxe.

peasants of the Rhætian Alps had won theirs by a long struggle from 1424 to 1471. From 1492 to 1501 the peasants on Lake Constance had maintained an ineffectual struggle against their feudal lord. Elsass had been wasted from 1493 to 1502 by similar attempts. In Carinthia there had been fierce war between lord and vassal from 1503 to 1514, and in 1512 and 1513 the Black Forest and Wurtemburg had seen castles blazing, and wild revolt for freedom. But, except in Switzerland and the Graubund, the privileged class had quenched all these risings in the blood of the peasants.

In 1524, however, the down-trodden peasantry were once more in revolt, and in 1525 their brethren from the Vosges to Carinthia, and from Thuringia to Switzerland, joined in the struggle. Unfortunately the religious fervour of the times only too naturally coloured the demands of the oppressed multitudes. Fanatics associated them with extravagant distortions of the teaching of Luther, and with much else drawn from a misuse of Scripture by their own heated fancies. Excesses on the side of the peasants were unjustly ascribed to the New Opinions, and the safety of society was declared to be bound up with the maintenance of the Romish Church. The frightful massacres of the unhappy countrymen were proclaimed a political necessity.

News of this terrible state of things spread forthwith into England, and roused a fiercer spirit than ever against all "heresy." It seemed, indeed, to justify all the violence of the past, and to call for even greater. "The fear of outrages and mischiefs to follow upon such heresies," says Sir Thomas More, "with the proof that men have had in some countries thereof, have been the cause that princes and people have been constrained to punish heresies by a terrible death; whereas, else, more easy ways had been taken with them."[1]

This very year, 1525, by a strange coincidence, witnessed a

[1] Dialogues, Book iv. c. 8.

notable progress in the New Opinions in England, which at once roused the wildest alarm among the bishops, and drew down on the unhappy Reformers the bitter enmity of the civil government as well. Till now the growing numbers of Reformers had been without a common organization, but in this year a number of persons, mostly in humble position, with a few of the clergy, banded themselves together as "The Christian Brethren," for the spread of Scriptural truth. The preaching, which had already been so wide, in secret, especially in the counties round London, was henceforth arranged systematically, and an extensive secret agency was set on foot for the dissemination of religious publications. A year before (1524), Latimer —hereafter to be the great popular preacher of the Reformation—had been won over to the good cause by Bilney, at Cambridge; and, in 1523, Tyndale, whose monument is the Reformation, had come to London, intent on translating the New Testament into English. Tunstal had become Bishop of London in that year—a kindly, worldly man, disinclined to severe measures against the Reformers, but keen enough against their books and doctrines; thoroughly loyal to things as they were, but, within the limits of a strict conservatism, a patron of the New Learning. In him Tyndale hoped to find a friend to his undertaking. Tunstal was, to use Sir Thomas More's words, "a man doubtless out of comparison" as a scholar; of courtly manners, fitted to grace society, but, like his brethren, he had no sympathy with making the New Testament a book for the people. Tyndale, a simple, unassuming poor priest, found no favour at his hands, and scant civility; but an alderman, who heard him preach, made him his guest. With him "he lived," says Monmouth, his new friend, "like a good priest. He studied most of the day and of the night, at his book, and wished nothing better than boiled meat and small single beer. Nor would he spend money on linen, but contented himself with woollen dress," as cheaper.

A year later, in 1524, Tyndale left London for Germany,

Monmouth having given him ten pounds, and even his enemies bearing witness that "he was well known for a man of right good living, studious, and well-learned in Scripture, and looked and preached holily."[1] Two years later the fruits of his diligence made their appearance in England, in the shape of his English New Testament, which is, substantially, that still in use. "The peculiar genius—if such a word be permitted—which breathes through it," says Mr. Froude, "the mingled tenderness and majesty, the Saxon simplicity, the preternatural grandeur, unequalled, unapproached in the attempted improvements of modern scholars, all are here, and bear the impress of the mind of one man—William Tyndale."[2]

Things had come to a head in England before Tyndale's New Testament appeared. Fish's "Supplication of the Beggars," a terrible attack on the monks and friars, of which more hereafter, had been scattered in the London streets, and had even been sent to Henry and read by him. Latimer had been ordered by the Bishop of Ely not to preach in his diocese, which included Cambridge. Bilney was under suspicion of heresy, and an indiscreet friend, Prior Barnes, an Augustine Friar, had precipitated an open rupture with the authorities, by a violent sermon. Latimer, Bilney, and he, had, as the result, been summoned to London, where Barnes was first put on his trial, and the bitter alternative offered him of "reading a recantation or being burned." Firmly refusing for a time, he at last yielded, and had a penance prescribed which made a great sensation at the time.

Tyndale's Testament had already attracted the attention of the authorities, for letters of warning had been sent from the Continent respecting it; but, though three thousand had been printed and smuggled into England, they passed from hand to hand so secretly, that for months, the Bishops could not find out the agency which circulated or introduced them.

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[1] Sir Thomas More.

[2] Froude's England, iii. 84.

In the spring of 1526, none of them had as yet reached England, but the police had already collected large numbers of Lutheran books which they had seized, in obedience to Wolsey's command, issued as early as 1521, and these were now to be used at Barnes's penance. The day having arrived for it, all London was in a ferment, for the great city was the very hot-bed of the Reformation. Old St. Paul's, though two hundred and thirty feet longer than the present building[1]—that is about half as long again as York Minster, was so full, by the hour appointed, "that no man could get in." Cardinal Wolsey sat on a platform above the altar steps, with thirty-six abbots, friars, and bishops—he in purple, they in damask and satin, all mitred. Huge baskets of the prohibited books that had been seized stood within the altar rails on the platform. Fisher, the bishop of Rochester, now sixty-seven years old, presently entered a pulpit raised on it, and preached earnestly against Luther and Dr. Barnes, but the people made so much disturbance that nothing could be heard. Sermon ended, in dumb show, Barnes and four others who had been brought in with him, had to kneel down, and ask forgiveness of God, of the Church, and of the Cardinal, and to declare that they were more charitably handled than their detestable heresies deserved. Barnes utterly humbled for the time, went through all this mockery, and then Wolsey departed "with all his mitred men with him."

A great fire having meanwhile been kindled before a huge crucifix which hung over the north door of the Cathedral, Barnes and his companions were now led thrice round the blazing pile, as a warning of what they might expect if they relapsed; but, for this time, the books were burned instead of themselves. Absolution was then granted them, and they were received back into communion with the Church.

[1] John Henry Blunt's Reformation, 83. He misplaces the incident by five years, putting it in 1521. His book belongs to the "Popery without the Pope" School. It must not be confounded with J. J. Blunt's Sketch of the Reformation.

A few months later, Latimer and Bilney were at last summoned before Wolsey, but Latimer bore himself with so much shrewdness that instead of a penance he received the Cardinal's license to preach anywhere in England.[1] Bilney, however, less dexterous, did not escape so easily. Thrown off his wonted self-reliance by Barnes's sad example, then so recent, he promised "not to preach any of Luther's opinions, but to impugn them everywhere." That he yielded thus was to be deplored, but men do not at once rise superior to human weakness in their self-sacrifice for opinions, and it is only by degrees that the martyr's stake loses its terrors.

The New Testament in English was now abroad among the people. The bishops had done their utmost to prevent its importation. Attempts had been made through the English ambassador, to punish the printer, but nothing could be done beyond seizing three hundred copies; the rest finding their way to London. Violence having failed, the notable folly was hit upon of trying to buy up all the copies in Antwerp and elsewhere, to stop their reaching England. Warham spent seventy pounds—equal to over eight hundred now—on this bright stroke of finance, the only result of which was that he got about 1,000 Testaments, and gave the printers the means of preparing a revised edition. Tyndale had printed 6,000 at Worms, and an Antwerp edition of 2,000 had been issued, so that 7,000 remained for the English market, and a still further supply very soon followed. Nor was it difficult to sell all that might come. "Englishmen," says a writer of the time, "are so eager for the gospel as to affirm that they would buy a New Testament, even if they had to give a hundred thousand pieces of money for it."

The first hint of the agency which was filling the country with the Scriptures seems to have been discovered by the bishops through Bilney's second trial, which we shall have to notice, in

[1] Latimer's Remains, page xxv.

the close of 1527, when the hated books had been circulating nearly eighteen months. Unseen hands were spreading them in every direction in spite of sheriff and priests. At last, in the spring of 1528, Tunstal succeeded through his spies and informers, in ferreting out the organization that had troubled him and his brethren so much. To the horror of the Bench it appeared that Lincoln was not the only diocese infected with heresy; the leaven had spread through the whole south of England. London swarmed with Reformers: Essex seemed to have gone bodily over to them: everywhere members of the "Christian Brothers," tradesmen, peasants, farmers, and even priests, were zealously circulating Tyndale's Testament, and Lutheran books. Upwards of 350 had been introduced into Oxford by a single agent, and they were offered for sale by hundreds, with little concealment, in London itself. The bishops at once set on foot a vigorous inquisition, to detect the offenders. Tunstal especially exerted himself, and erelong his informers were able to report that they had brought to light the wide ramifications of "the brethren," in Essex, and other shires round London. Crowds of simple country people, guilty of no crime but having the New Testament in their own language in their possession, or of having listened to its being read by others, were dragged to prison or summoned before the bishops' court, and forced to abjure, by threats of the dungeon, the rack, or the stake. The merchants who had aided in bringing it from the Continent were thrown into prison, or had to flee.

Panic struck, the Reformers still at large, butchers, tailors, and carpenters, who felt themselves suspected, strove to escape in the holds of vessels, or in disguise, anywhere out of England. But even on the Continent they were not safe, for heretics were treated by all Governments as outlaws, so that even in France or Belgium they had to watch against English emissaries sent over to arrest them.

To the consternation of the bishops, however, it soon began

to be whispered that heresy was no longer confined to the common people, but had showed itself in the university of Oxford —the nursery of the clergy. Like Cambridge, it was a very different place from what it had been before the revival of letters. "The students," says an eye-witness, writing in 1520, "rush to Greek letters, they endure fasting, toil and hunger, in pursuit of them," and where Greek was studied the new opinions were sure to follow. Matters were, indeed, even worse than was at first suspected. Two years before, in December, 1525, Wolsey had transferred a number of students from Cambridge to his magnificent foundation of Cardinal College. They were all chosen for their abilities, and if, possibly, suspected of heresy, Wolsey was not the man to trouble them, so long as they kept it to themselves. Oxford had boasted of being without blot or suspicion till now, but things were suddenly changed, for four of the new comers—Frith, Clark, Sumner, and Taverner, were found to be zealous Gospellers. Clark had been in the habit of reading St. Paul's epistles to young men in his rooms, and gradually found himself the centre of a steadily increasing circle of undergraduates, who would not be dissuaded from attending, in spite of his warning of the peril they incurred for doing so. "I fell down on my knees," says one of them, Anthony Delabere, whose touching narrative is given by Foxe, "and with tears and sighs, besought him that for the tender mercy of God, he should not refuse me, saying that I trusted verily that He who had begun this in me would not forsake me, but would give me grace to continue therein to the end. When he heard me say so he came to me, took me in his arms, and kissed me, saying, 'The Lord God Almighty grant you so to do, and from henceforth ever take me for your father, and I will take you for my son in Christ.'"

They had been in the habit of thus meeting for about six months, when in Easter, 1527, Thomas Garret, a fellow of Magdalen, but now a London curate, came back to Oxford to circulate Testaments. Unfortunately he had been tracked, and

orders were issued for his arrest, which led to the discovery of all that was going on among the reforming students. A narrative written by Delabere, still survives,[1] and paints with touching pathos the ruin which thus burst on his associates. Heretical books were found hidden behind the wainscot of Clark's room, and he was forthwith thrown into prison, where he died before the end of the year. Some escaped to the Continent; others recanted, and had to go through an ignominious humiliation.

Meanwhile poor Bilney had once more got into trouble. His rash promise to be silent in public had proved more than he could keep, and he had consequently left Cambridge in the spring of 1527, a few months after his appearance before Wolsey, on a missionary tour through the east of England—the district most friendly to the Reformers. He even came to London, and, by the favour of some of the incumbents, preached in various churches. As before, he zealously urged the great doctrine of faith in Christ, followed by a holy life, as the one means of salvation, and spoke lightly, in comparison, of the worship of images, or pilgrimages to holy shrines, or the adoration of the Virgin. For this he was forthwith arrested, and once more brought before Wolsey, who recognized him, and charged him with having broken his promise of a few months before, not to teach the Lutheran doctrines. Defence was impossible, and the choice lay between the flames and recanting. Thrice he refused, but at last, like Barnes, he gave way, and on the 8th December, 1527, went through the same humiliation as Barnes had had to bear—standing bareheaded on the same spot, bearing a faggot. But even this did not set him free: he was sentenced to a year's imprisonment, and thus rejoined Latimer, at Cambridge, only in the spring of 1529.

The bishops, however, were fighting a hopeless battle, for when one assailant was silenced another presently disturbed

[1] See Foxe, v. 421—427.

them more than ever. Tyndale had sent over his New Testament in 1526, and it was now followed, in 1528, by his "Parable of the Wicked Mammon," and "The Obedience of a Christian Man," in which the Pope was openly denounced as Antichrist, and the great doctrine of Justification by Faith, with the necessity of a holy life, was insisted on, in contradiction to the current theology. The former is an exposition of the parable of the Unjust Steward; the latter a defence of the Reformers from the imputations of disloyalty, and of treasonable and socialistic teaching, falsely made to their prejudice. Both books were written with great ability, and created a profound sensation in England, for they passed the whole Popish system in review, with an earnestness and force possible only in an age when it was still an awful impersonation to Englishmen, of all that was contrary to God and man. Both drew down the unmeasured indignation of the Church authorities, who condemned them in every variety of abuse as "frantic," "pestilent," "contagious," and "damnable." Tunstal even induced Sir Thomas More to undertake the task of refuting them, but though, beyond question, the best champion the Church could have chosen, his metaphysics and dexterous palliations—in spite of his grace of style—were no match for the plain practical force of a reply by Tyndale, which soon appeared.

These books, so violently condemned by the bishops and their party, rendered great service to the Reformers. Their brave and cheering tone opportunely roused many who had been terrified by the vigour of the Church authorities. Hereafter we shall find Bilney, when he set out, as he pathetically expressed it, to go up to Jerusalem, carrying with him as his great supports and encouragements to fidelity, Tyndale's New Testament, and "The Obedience of a Christian Man"—and Bainham, another martyr, strengthening himself to brave the fire by the same two aids. Indeed the martyrs, as a rule, went to the flames with the Testament in their hands. But "The Obedience" was even more than a comfort and support to

individuals: it played a notable part in preparing the public mind for the changes now fast coming. It brought into prominence, for the first time, the two great truths which form the essence of the English Reformation—the supreme authority of Scripture in the Church, and of the king in the State. Presented with Tyndale's wonderful force of expression and clearness of argument, these principles at once took root in the public mind. From this time the Reformers had a definite aim and purpose, which speedily bore its fruits. Within four years the Royal Supremacy was formally acknowledged by the humbled clergy, and the Scriptures took their place only a little later as the ultimate authority in all matters of faith and practice.[1] Far and wide, Tyndale's book, directly and indirectly, led to these great results: men like Latimer caught its lessons, and spread them on every side from the pulpit, and they passed from mouth to mouth among the mass of the people. Even Henry himself seems to have seen and read "The Obedience," for a copy which belonged to Anne Boleyn appears to have fallen in his way, and to have pleased him greatly. "It was a book," he said, "for him and all kings to read."[2] Wolsey and Campeggio were precipitating a revolution by their mock proceedings at Blackfriars when these words were spoken.

In the autumn of 1529, Tunstall returned from a mission to Cambray, with all the New Testaments of Tyndale he had been able to buy up at Antwerp, and was unwise enough to add fuel to the popular excitement by burning them in a great bonfire in Cheapside. The presses were, of course, at once set to work on a new edition, with the money paid for the burned books, and thousands of corrected copies were smuggled into England within a few months. Tyndale was meanwhile indefatigable in other directions. His "Practice of Prelates," reached England apparently at the close of the year 1530, when Parliament, after

[1] Demaus' Tyndale, 210, 211.

[2] Dixon's Two Queens, iv. 68.

Wolsey's fall, had reassembled for the first time in seven years, and the House of Commons had risen against the most flagrant abuses of the Church system. The book is a fierce and unmeasured attack on the practices by which the Pope and clergy had gradually exchanged primitive poverty and humility for their present glory. As he well might, he hated the whole system from his heart. In the Pope he saw Antichrist and the Scarlet Woman: the clergy were Rome's agents, to rob and oppress the people; and the monks and friars were "caterpillars," "horse-leeches," "drones," and "draff." Such a book, circulated far and wide, left little hope of Henry, and More, now chancellor, being able to carry out their scheme of prohibiting all serious reform. For the first time overt acts of hostility to the Church showed themselves, for the crosses on the highways were now disappearing, pulled down by unknown hands.

The spring of 1530 had seen the first appearance of Latimer as a court preacher. His zeal at Cambridge, on behalf of the divorce, had been reported to Henry, and the result was a command to preach before him on the Second Sunday in Lent, —a task he performed so well, that he seems to have been retained to preach, or at least to stay at court, during the rest of Lent. That such a man should have come into notice at such a time was hopeful for the future. It may be that the friendship of Anne Boleyn for him dated from this visit. His discourses have not come down to us, but we may be sure they showed the same fearless honesty as made the Londoners cheer him in after years, and struggle to touch his gown, as he walked down the Strand to preach at Whitehall. Instinct with the fire of genius, and yet simple, the plain talk of a plain man, who sprang from the body of the people; who sympathized strongly with their wants and feelings, and uttered their opinions with an earnestness that knew no fear, they spread far and wide a contagious enthusiasm for opinions thus nobly advanced.

But Henry was as little a convert to the new doctrines as ever, and wished the people to understand the fact. A proclamation

was therefore issued in December, 1530, immediately after the Commons had passed acts curtailing the extortions of the clergy, ordering all heretical books, and especially the New Testament, to be delivered up, and empowering the bishops to use all diligence to arrest the progress of heresy, by seizing all suspected persons, and handing over the guilty and relapsed to the civil power for punishment. The circulation of "heretical books" had become one of the great questions of the day, and it needed discrimination on the part of the authorities. A body of twelve men from each university was therefore appointed by Henry to decide what were "good and fruitful," what "erroneous and seditious." But the Reformers were few as yet, and were completely outnumbered on the commission. Sir Thomas More, Gardiner, and Tunstal, and most of the others, represented the old party; Latimer, Crome, and William Latimer, the new opinions. The works of Tyndale were condemned as full of "great and pestilent heresies," and his New Testament, especially, was forbidden as dangerous. Another proclamation embodied the report of the commission, and the clergy were ordered to read from their pulpits an exhortation to their flocks "to expel and purge from their breasts all contagious doctrine and pestiferous traditions" which the New Testament in English might have taught them.[1] Yet there was light in the darkness, for Henry added "that he would cause the New Testament to be faithfully and purely translated into the mother tongue, that it might be freely given to the people, when he saw their manner and behaviour convenient to receive the same." That time was not, in Henry's opinion, till some years later, yet, in the end, it was no new "faithful and pure" translation which he authorized, but that of Tyndale, which he and the bishops had united to proscribe.

Meanwhile, towards the close of the year, Latimer wrote to the king in favour of the free circulation of the New Testament.

[1] Burnet, i. 325.

Froude rightly calls the document one "of almost unexampled grandeur." Fearlessly waiving aside the adverse report of the commission as one-sided and misleading, he pressed Henry with a loftiness of appeal rarely equalled, to cancel his proclamation based on it. It is to the king's honour that such fidelity not only brought no disfavour, but led Latimer to be presently chosen a royal chaplain. Yet the fears that always hinder great changes for the time made Henry pause before allowing even the most needful religious reform. While this letter from Latimer was yet hardly read by him, Wolsey had sent him a last counsel from his deathbed, to "have a vigilant eye to depress the new sect—the Lutherans, that it do not increase through your negligence, in such a sort as you be at length compelled to put on harness (armour) on your back to subdue them." He then quoted the case of Bohemia, where, as he averred, heresy having been allowed to grow, had brought it about that "the rebels in the end slew the king, the nobles, and all the gentlemen of the realm," and made Bohemia to "be abhorred of all Christian nations." Henry was exhorted to consider the story of King Richard II., who lived in the time of Wycliffe's "seditious and erroneous opinions. Did not the Commons in his time rise against the nobles and head governors of this realm of England, and did they not fall to spoiling and robbery, which was their only pretence to have all things in common? Did not also the traitorous heretic Sir John Oldcastle, Lord of Cobham, pitch a field with heretics against King Henry V., to whom God gave the victory?" To neglect such precedents, said the dying man, in conclusion, would lead to "the utter ruin and desolation of this realm."[1] It was in an atmosphere charged with such fears of all religious change, that Henry and the men of his age had to move.

The spring of 1531 saw the revolution in full course, for the whole clergy had now been brought under the penalties of

[1] Cavendish, 278.

premunire, and a forced acknowledgment had been extorted from them, of Henry's supremacy over the Church, in place of that of the Pope, which had hitherto been the keystone of the Church. But if the bishops had thus to bow before Henry, they avenged themselves by increased vigour against the Reformers. Latimer, Bilney, and Crome, were forthwith accused by Stokesley, now Bishop of London, (1530-1539) for heretical preaching in his diocese, but he could only lay hold on Crome, who was a London incumbent, and him he frightened into retracting. With More as Chancellor, the Reformers had cause to look fondly back on the clemency of Wolsey. Latimer, now a Hereford rector, had roused the ill-will of the priests and monks in his neighbourhood by his preaching, though perhaps by its popularity as much as its heresy. Nothing, however, was done against him for the time. But in the summer of 1531, he was once more in London, and, apparently, in Stokesley's power; yet, though he preached in the city against the abuses and superstitions of the day, and counselled his hearers, "if they would go on pilgrimages, to make them to their poor neighbours round them," Henry refused to listen to the bishop's accusations, and Latimer returned in safety to West Kington.

Still, if the bishops were baulked in their wish to destroy Latimer, they were more successful against his friend and spiritual father, Bilney. Ever since his release from prison, in the end of 1528, that lowly and gentle spirit had been oppressed with shame at his weakness in the hour of trial, till now, at last, he had risen above the fear of death. His Bible, which is still preserved at Cambridge, reveals affectingly the solemn calmness of his self-sacrifice, for it still bears the mark of his pen at the touching verse, "Fear not, for I have redeemed thee, and called thee by thy name, thou art mine; *when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.*" He had underlined these italicised words.

In the spring of 1531, having gathered together those of his

friends still at Cambridge, he tenderly bade them farewell, saying that "He must needs go up to Jerusalem, and would see their face no more," and forthwith set out to Norwich. There, he preached privately at first, "to confirm the brethren," but afterwards, openly, in the fields, confessing his past weakness, maintaining the doctrine he had professed before his fall to be the very truth, and warning all men "to beware by him, and never to trust to their fleshly friends, in matters of religion." Returning to Norwich he gave one of Tyndale's New Testaments, and a copy of his "Obedience of a Christian Man," to a nun whom he had won to Christ, and for this he was presently apprehended, and thrown into prison. No new trial was needed. All that was needed before burning him as a relapsed heretic was a writ from London, and for this the bishop, Nix, a blind man, instantly sent. Bilney was thoroughly orthodox in the great doctrines of Rome. He held the Church laws to be in great part not only useful, but agreeable to Scripture; with respect to the Mass, he never varied from the old faith; and he believed that "only priests ordained by bishops have the keys, by virtue of which they both bind and loose; and that the unworthiness of a priest does not lessen the efficacy of sacraments, so long as he is tolerated by the Church." But he had condemned images; he had reproved the immorality of the priests; he had spoken against pilgrimages, and he had said that "our Saviour Christ is our Mediator between us and the Father; why then should we seek for remedy to any saint inferior to Christ?"

Lord Chancellor More, as his epitaph boasts, was hard on heretics. "Go your ways," said he, when asked for the writ to burn Bilney, "burn him first, and then come to me for a bill (writ) of my hand." A few days sufficed to get the authority needed, and these Bilney spent, in part, amidst true hearted friends who visited him in the prison. Others, however, troubled him not a little by repeated attempts to get him to recant once more. But he was firm. The writ received, he was led from the Norwich Guildhall prison, under escort of men armed with

glaives[1] and halberds;[2] his friend, Dr. Warner, "parson of Winterton," bravely walking by his side. Dressed in a layman's gown, for he had been degraded from the priesthood; his sleeves hanging down and his arms out; his hair cropped close at his degradation—a "little body in person, but always of a good upright countenance,"—Bilney paced on through the streets, scattering alms with which Dr. Warner had provided him. Repeating the words, "Hear my prayer, O Lord, consider my desire," and thrice over adding the next verse, "And enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified," he let himself be bound to the stake, after putting off his gown, jacket, and doublet, so that he stood in his hose and shirt. The wind was high, and the reeds piled round him blazed fiercely, but the faggots needed to be thrice kindled before there was fire enough to burn him to death. "Jesus," and "I believe," were his last words.[3] So died the first of the prominent martyrs of the Reformation; "Good Bilney," "that blessed Bilney," "Saint Bilney," as Latimer calls him; "a witness against the tyrannical see of Rome."

Bilney perished on the 19th August, 1531. Wolsey had died on the 23rd November, 1530. More had lost no time in kindling the fires.

Cromwell succeeded Wolsey in the confidence of Henry almost immediately, and from the first sought to help on the Reformation. Tyndale had been denounced by the bishops in May, 1530, but Cromwell now urged the king to bring him to England to give counsel in religious affairs. But Stokesley and More were too zealous in hunting down the Reformers to make his return safe. His brother and a friend had just been arrested by them in London, on the charge of introducing his New Testament from abroad and selling them, and of sending money

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[1] A long sword with only one sharp edge.

[2] A weapon consisting of a spear-head and axe in one piece, fixed on a wooden shaft.

[3] See Foxe, iv. 619—657.

to him and corresponding with him. For this they had been sentenced by the Star Chamber[1] Court to sit on horseback, at the Standard at Cheapside, their faces turned to the horses' tails, and their cloaks hung with the hated Testaments, and to pay a heavy fine. Vaughan, the king's envoy, had been specially instructed to try to induce Tyndale to return to England, and Henry himself, wrote on the matter, but the Reformer was prudent enough to decline the invitation. John Frith, the future martyr, his bosom friend, had ventured into England in March, and no doubt brought back news that it was safer to remain on the Continent. It was well, indeed, that he did so, for his "Practice of Prelates" which reached England soon after, made Henry his bitter enemy, by its speaking of the divorce as contrary to the word of God.

Persecution was, meanwhile, waxing hotter and hotter in England. Convocation had decreed at the end of February, that the body of a friend of Tyndale's, William Tracy, of Toddington, in Gloucester, should be dug up from its grave and cast out of consecrated ground as that of a "heretic;" Latimer and Crome had already been accused, and on the last day of March, John Lambert, or Nicholson, a convert of Bilney, and formerly, for a time, chaplain to the English at Antwerp, was brought before Convocation, and afterwards before Archbishop Warham, in whose house he was confined till the archbishop's death, in August, 1532, when the process against him was abandoned.

The fierce disputes about the divorce, in which all the women were for the queen and all the men for the king,[2] and the still more bitter wranglings of Convocation as to the apportionment of the penalty levied on the clergy for premunire;[3] and the

[1] This name is generally explained from the ornaments on the roof of the chamber. It was really derived from the "starrs," or contracts and obligations kept in it. See Mueller's Etymologisches Wörterbuch.

[2] Burnet, i. 213.

[3] More committed fifteen of the clergy and five laymen to prison for a

noisy strife at the universities for and against the king's demand for an opinion on his marriage, were thus varied through 1531 by as fierce a zeal against the Reformers. Another victim, a curate at Maidstone, was given to the flames. He was charged with importing the New Testament, and was burned at Gravesend, after a long imprisonment, on the sentence of Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, and Archbishop Warham; More, of course, granting the writ.

Nor was Stokesley idle. He, too, like the blind Bishop of Norwich, wished to boast of having burned heretics, and was soon able to do so. Richard Bayfield, a monk of Bury Abbey, had been won to the Reformers by two itinerant "Christian Brethren," brickmakers by trade, who from time to time went secretly through Essex to spread the new opinions. He had also obtained Tyndale's Testament and his "Obedience of a Christian Man," but being found out was put into the abbey prison for nine months, after being whipped and laid in the stocks. Escaping finally to Cambridge, he sought instructions from Bilney, but dreading more trouble he fled again to London, where he was sheltered by the "Christian Brothers" who had first led him to Christ. He was soon discovered, however, and brought before Tunstal, who, like Wolsey, was averse to blood, and persuaded him to recant. Erelong he fled to the Continent, where he could be in a measure safe, and there he joined Tyndale and other exiles. He even ventured back several times to London, to sell Tyndale's Testaments, but was caught at last, and thrust into the Lollards' tower in St. Paul's, of which Latimer used to say, it were better to be in purgatory than there. But here he committed a fresh offence, by seeking to strengthen in the faith a priest confined with him for the sake of the Gospel.

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disturbance at a meeting of Convocation at the Chapter House, Westminster, about the king's fine. The poor clergy said "they had not used Wolsey's Court; only the rich bishops and abbots had. They should not pay; the others only should."

For this he was taken to a cellar of the Bishop's, in Paternoster Row, and there kept standing, by iron bands round his neck and legs, in the vain hope of forcing him to give up the names of those to whom he had sold books. At last Stokesley condemned him as a relapsed heretic, and he was burned at Smithfield on the 21st November, 1531.

A fresh victim speedily followed him to the stake. A leather merchant of the City, Tewkesbury by name, had recanted before Tunstal, but was again arrested in the fall of 1531. More had him carried to his garden at Chelsea, and there tied to a tree and whipped, to make him recant once more. This failing, cords were tied round his head, and strained till the blood started from his eyes. He was then sent to the Tower, and stretched on the rack till he could hardly walk. Overpowered by such barbarity, the unhappy man at last yielded and was released, but, unable to keep silent, he was soon once more apprehended and brought before Stokesley and More at Chelsea, condemned, and burnt at Smithfield on the 20th of December.

How many more Englishmen suffered this terrible death at this time can never be known, but it may be judged by the remark of a correspondent of Erasmus, that wood was getting dear in London from the quantity used for burning heretics at Smithfield.

But burnings were not all men had to suffer—hardly the worst. Numbers were racked, tortured, imprisoned, and harried in a thousand ways, for no greater crime than refusing to believe that the bread on the communion table was God, or for teaching their children, or reading to their neighbours, a chapter of the New Testament, or for having one in their own possession. The bishops were trying to set up a reign of terror, and filled their prisons with countless victims. "Why stand I numbering the sand?" asks John Foxe, "for if all the register books were sought, it would be an infinite thing to recite all them which, throughout the realm, were troubled for such like matters." What shall we say, after this, of the boast of an organ of the

"Conspirators," that "the work going on in England is an earnest and carefully organized attempt on the part of a rapidly increasing body of priests and laymen to bring our Church and country up to the full standard of catholic faith and practice, and eventually to plead for her union with Rome"?

CHAPTER XII.

THE FORLORN HOPE OF FREEDOM.

THE year 1532 saw the ecclesiastical revolution in full course, but it brought no mitigation of sufferings to the Reformers. In January, Dr. Bennet, a prominent Church lawyer, was sent to Rome with the opinions of the universities. Meanwhile, before any answer could be returned, the Commons, in March, at the king's dictation, to show the Pope how little he feared him, passed an act conditionally prohibiting the payment of annates, or first fruits, a tax of their whole first year's income, paid by bishops and clergy alike, on their appointment to dioceses or livings. Levied originally to defend Christendom against the Turk, it had very soon been appropriated by the popes and their officials to their private uses, and its threatened loss touched them sharply, for it had yielded nearly three millions since the accession of Henry VII. But the Commons were not disposed to limit their reforms to matters affecting the Pope alone. Bishops' courts must be reformed. Prisoners brought before them never saw their accusers, and were summarily required either to abjure or burn.[1] The king, wished the House, in the meantime, to leave such matters, but for once it resisted him, and sent him a long list of ecclesiastical grievances. In May, Convocation had to sign its own death warrant, and surrender all claim to legislate

[1] Burnet, i. 236.

for the Church, even in the most purely spiritual details. Henceforth it could not pass the most needful canon—that is, rule or law affecting the clergy—without a royal license, and in fact became what it still remains, little more than a venerable shadow. On the day after the annihilation of this ancient Parliament of the clergy, Sir Thomas More, lamenting its subversion as a step towards ecclesiastical revolution, and seeing the divorce at hand, resigned the Chancellorship, and was succeeded by Audley, the late speaker. But the change brought no lull in the tempest of persecution. Even the continent was no longer safe, for Henry was trying to arrest Tyndale, among others, though in Antwerp, and he had to flee thence for his life.[1]

Stokesley had never forgiven Latimer for his sermons in London the year before, and after various unsuccessful attempts, at last got him into his power, to answer for the "crimes and grave excesses committed by him within the diocese of London." On the 29th January, 1532, the Reformer appeared before the bishop in the Consistory Court, at St. Paul's, five or six bishops sitting with Stokesley, as assessors. The fire had been removed from the great fireplace of the room, and a curtain hung before it, behind which a clerk had been hidden to take down all Latimer's answers, without his knowing. His quick ears, however, heard the pen "walking," and he was on his guard. Questions ingeniously framed were put to him, to ensnare him, and he knew that, if convicted, neither Cromwell nor Anne Boleyn, his steady friends, could save him, for the king gloried in his orthodoxy. The examination continued, at intervals, for six weeks, but failed to establish any charge of heresy. Stokesley was too vindictive, however, to let him go, and referred the case to Convocation.

It was well for Latimer that his popularity, and the fact that

[1] Demaus' Tyndale, 343. An admirable book; the fruit of much independent research, and admirably written. All interested in the Reformation should obtain it and its companion volume, Hugh Latimer, by the same author.

the Church itself was now on its trial, made it impolitic to treat him with open injustice. The Commons were at the moment impeaching Bishops' Courts, and Warham, feeble in his old age, had been forced to content himself by a private protest against this invasion of ecclesiastical privileges.

In March, Latimer appeared before Convocation, and having thrice refused to sign a list of articles submitted to him, was excommunicated by Warham and ordered into custody at Lambeth till his fate was decided. Crome had signed just such a list, and, like him, Latimer was not prepared categorically to deny any of them, yet shrank from sanctioning the abuses which had become connected with them. Summoned once and again from his dungeon he fought bravely for weeks, but at last, brave as he was, even he yielded and consented to sign. But he was not even then set free. It was not till the 22nd of April, after three months of mental torture and humiliation that he was absolved, on craving forgiveness of Convocation on his knees. If even he, one of the most fearless of men, was thus awed into an ignoble, though only temporary submission, how much excuse is there for the weakness of others?

But there was one—a layman, at that moment in Newgate, who was to bring back this wavering Peter from his faint-hearted denial of the truth. On the same day on which Latimer was trying hard before the Convocation to reconcile opposites—his conscience and the old faith—Stokesley's vicar-general had a relapsed heretic before him, whom he was presently to condemn.

James Bainham, the son of a Gloucestershire knight, after a liberal education in the New Learning, had chosen the law for a profession. He was a man of singular uprightness and charity, but having married the widow of that Simon Fish, whose "Supplication of the Beggars" had created so great a stir by its keen satire on the clergy, he was accused before More, and taken from his chambers in the Middle Temple to More's house at Chelsea. Gentle confinement there having

failed to win him back to the old faith, he was tied to a tree in the garden and whipped; then sent to the Tower, and there racked so terribly, in the presence of More, that he was lamed. His great offence was that he would not inform on any of the lawyers, his friends, or tell where he had hidden his books. His wife also was sent to prison for denying that they were in the house, and his goods were confiscated.

Three appearances before Stokesley's court, in December and February, with close prison between, added to the racking and torments he had endured, at last, for the moment, bowed even Bainham's brave heart, and he finally consented to abjure. Besides this he had to pay £20, equal to £240 now, to the king; to go to the Cross at St. Paul's in procession, to stand during a sermon there, with a faggot on his shoulder, and then to be led back to the prison. He was then released, after months of martyrdom.

Scarcely had he been a month at home, however, before his conscience smote him so for having yielded, that he could not be at peace till he had openly asked forgiveness from the congregation of "Christian Brethren" he attended, at its meeting place in Bow Lane. Nor was this enough. The Sunday after, he rose in St. Austin's Church, a New Testament in English in his hand, and the "Obedience of a Christian Man" in his bosom—both Tyndale's books—and stood, with tears streaming down his cheeks, declaring that he had denied God, and praying all to forgive him. He, further, wrote to the bishop, to his brother, and to others, in the same spirit. For all this he was forthwith arrested afresh and lodged in the Tower. He had been condemned as a relapsed heretic a day or two before Latimer was set free, and having been carried to Newgate to be near the place of burning, was visited by the fallen Reformer and some friends. They found him sitting on some straw, with a book and a wax candle in his hand, praying and reading. Asked for what he was to die, he told them that he had spoken of Thomas à Becket as a traitor, and had said that there was no

such thing as purgatory. Latimer, ill at ease in his own mind, cautioned him to beware lest he was dying for vain glory; but Bainham, while thanking him, expressed his hope that he, himself, would stand to the defence of the truth,"[1] adding, says Foxe, "comfortable words." How deeply his counsels sank into Latimer's heart showed itself in all his future life.

The last day of April saw Bainham die for his faith. Standing on a barrel of pitch, with bags of gunpowder hung from his neck he prayed for his enemies as the fire swept up around him; his last words—"The Lord forgive Sir Thomas More,"[2] making a specially deep impression.

But one victim would not content Stokesley. John Frith, a bosom friend of Tyndale's, and obnoxious even on that ground, had long been marked as a future victim. He had been one of Clark's band of reformers at Oxford, and had been imprisoned with the others in the cellar where the salt fish of the college, used in Lent, and on Fridays and fast days, had hitherto been kept. Four, however, having died from the stench of their dungeon, and from having been fed on salt fish exclusively, as a penance, from February to August, Wolsey ordered the dismissal of the survivors, Frith among them, on condition that they should not go beyond ten miles from Oxford. After a time, however, fearing another arrest, he fled beyond seas and joined Tyndale, by whom he was welcomed, for, though only a young man, he was no less marked by abilities and learning than by moderation and Christian spirit.

Hearing that More had resigned the Great Seal, in May, 1532, Frith thought he might venture once more into England, but soon found himself in great danger, and tried to get back again to Antwerp. But his return had been made known by the spies of the bishops, who were numerous among the Reformers, and "the ways and havens were beset" for him, while great rewards were offered for his arrest. Tyndale wrote

[1] Strype's Eccles. Memorials, 422.

[2] Foxe, iv. 705.

him a kind and wise letter on hearing of his danger, cautioning him to meddle as little as he could with the doctrine of the Real Presence, but unfortunately the letter reached him too late. He had formerly written a tract against Purgatory, which had roused the bishops against him, and had now, already, drawn up in manuscript a short treatise on the Real Presence, for the use of a friend. His having done so was instantly reported by an informer, to Sir Thomas More, to whom any discussion of the doctrine of the Mass, however reverend and cautious, was the source of all heresy, as questioning that which was the keystone of the whole Romish system. Escape was henceforth almost hopeless, and autumn saw Frith arrested in Essex, on his way to set sail for the Continent, and after being brought before More and the bishops, he was committed to the Tower.

Things were so rapidly changing in England, however, in some respects, that there seemed a hope that Frith would escape after all. Warham had died in August, and Cranmer, who was known to lean towards the Reformers, was named by Henry as his successor. While Frith lay in the Tower, moreover, the dispute with Rome had come to a head, by the king marrying Anne Boleyn in defiance of Papal prohibitions, while More, immediately after, retired into private life; for though he had resigned in May, he was not formally released from his Chancellorship till the end of next January.

Unfortunately, in the meantime, More, in his zeal to defend the doctrines of the Church, had written a reply to Frith's tract, declaring that it contained "all the poison that Wycliffe, Tyndale, and Zuinglius had taught concerning the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar; not only affirming it to be very bread still, as Luther does, but also, as *these other beasts do*, that it is nothing else." After this, unless Frith recanted, nothing could save him.

But he was not to be daunted by any peril. Though young, he was of heroic mould, and answered More with such learning and skill of argument as showed no common mind. That

Cranmer, in after years, should have spoken of Frith's writings as having specially convinced him that the Romish view of the Sacrament was untenable,[1] is sufficient proof of their surpassing merit. Nor was his moral grandeur less striking than his intellectual power. Such was the confidence in his word felt even by his jailers, that, after a short time, he was allowed to go out of the Tower "during the night, to consult with good men," while preparing his reply to More; nor did he fail to come freely back after such glimpses of liberty, though to return was, as he knew, to die at the stake.

Sometime about the coronation of Anne Boleyn, on the 1st of June, 1533, this leader of the forlorn hope of spiritual liberty was once more brought before his judges. One of Henry's chaplains had inveighed, in a court sermon, against the leniency with which heretics were treated, and especially complained of no attempt being made at the "reformation" of one who, at that moment, though a prisoner, had openly written against the Real Presence. Frith was thus clearly pointed out, and Henry was too jealous of his orthodoxy to let the complaint be repeated. Cranmer and Cromwell were forthwith summoned and commanded to examine the offender—for even in the trial of a heretic the immense capacity of the king for business left his ministers, whether civil or ecclesiastical, only the preparation of the case for his future personal decision. From the Tower, Frith was taken to the archbishop's palace at Croydon, that he might be out of reach of the people. But Cromwell and Cranmer were alike anxious that he should not suffer, and caused it to be hinted to him, through a gentleman of the archbishop's palace, ordered to bring him up the river to Lambeth, as the first stage of his journey, that if he would only be advised by their counsel and yield a little, they would not let him "sustain any open shame." "They knew him," continued his friendly guard, "to be an eloquent, learned young man, young in years but old

[1] Foxe, v. 9.

in knowledge, and of great forwardness and likelihood to be a most profitable member of this realm." If he yielded somewhat, well; if he stood stiff, they could not save him, for "like as you have good friends, so you have mortal foes and enemies." But Frith believed that conscience bound him to stand by his opinion respecting the Mass, at whatever cost, and gently waived aside the well-meant counsel.

From Lambeth the road lay through the thick woods that then stretched on each side of Brixton Causeway, and along this Frith now set out with two guards, to Croydon; but as they went on, the anxiety of Cromwell and Cranmer that he should escape was once more shown. It had been arranged that he was to be let slip unnoticed into the woods on the side of the road next Kent, his native county, whence he might get off to the Continent, while the search for him would be made in the woods on the *other* side. But, wisely or not, he would not avail himself of the friendly proposal. "If I should now run away," said he, "I should run from my God, and from the testimony of His Holy Word—worthy, then of a thousand hells." So he willingly fared on into the jaws of death, to bear witness for Christ.

Cranmer was in a painful position, for he still held the Romish doctrine in all its strictness, as is incidentally and beyond challenge shown even by his private correspondence.[1]

To tolerate religious opinions not their own was then held a crime by Reformers and Romanists alike, as it is by Romanists still. More, alone, had even theorized about toleration, and he had flagrantly contradicted his theory by his practice. The primate's gentle and tender nature, indeed, shrank from condemning Frith, and led him to send for him "three or four times to persuade him to leave his imagination." But he fancied that God had "delivered him into the hands of the bishops" that he might maintain the truth before them, and could not be brought to yield in the least, so that for Cranmer as well as himself there

[1] See his letter to Joachim Vadian (1537), in Zurich Letters, II.

was no escape. He was, therefore, necessarily left for further examination and trial.[1]

On the the 20th June, 1533, while all mouths were full of the splendours of Anne Boleyn's coronation, just three weeks before, Frith was brought before Stokesley, Bishop of London, Longland, of Lincoln, and Gardiner, of Winchester, his old college tutor at Cambridge—all men fierce to the death against the new opinions, though, possibly Gardiner may, in this case, have felt inclined to mercy. But Frith's unbending steadfastness and their own alarm at the spirit of the times, quickened, no doubt, by their acting in the present case by special directions from Henry—left room for only one issue. Any tenderness would have meant their own death, for the reign of terror set up by the king had now cowed all men for the time; even the highest feeling that their property and lives were at his disposal; while not a few were praying God that He "would not allow this tyranny much longer."[3] Frith's wife had sent him word from Antwerp, "that she was well content with the will of God, and would not, for her sake, have the glory of God hindered," and Tyndale who, even before his long exile, had known and loved him, wrote him—if, indeed, he received the letter—"There falleth not a hair till the hour be come, and when it has come, necessity carries us hence, though we be not willing. But if we be willing, then have we a reward and thanks. Let Bilney be a warning to you. Let not your body faint. Let no persuasions of worldly wisdom bear rule in your heart; no, though they be your friends that counsel you. He that endureth to the end shall be saved. If the pain be above your strength, remember, Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, I will give it to you. And pray to your Father, in

[1] This narrative is given in full in Foxe, viii. 695—698.

[2] See letter of Hilles to Bullinger, 1541, in Zurich Letters, 207.

[3] *Ibid.*, 215. Mr. Green charges Cromwell with having set up the reign of terror, but if so, why was it more awful after Cromwell's murder than in his lifetime, and how did the men of the day trace it to Henry himself?

that name, and He shall ease your pain, or shorten it."[1] It was not doubtful how one so steadfast would act, and so Frith had to die.

On the 4th of July, the last scene filled Smithfield with a wondering crowd. With Frith, a poor young Kentish lad, an apprentice tailor in London, was to suffer, and nobly did both of them bear the flames. Frith's book had converted his fellow martyr, and he had bravely told the bishops that as to recanting, he would do as Frith did, thus deliberately choosing to die. Cranmer had written to a friend, three days before, that he "had sent for Frith three or four times to persuade him to leave the imagination" for which he thus gave his life, "but for all that we could do, he would not apply to any counsel. Notwithstanding, now, he is at a final end with all examinations; for my Lord of London hath given sentence, and delivered him to the secular power, when he looketh every day to go into the fire. And there is also condemned with him one Andrew, a tailor, for the self-same opinion." A few years later and Cranmer was to be Frith's disciple, and within twenty years another fire was to blaze under the walls of Oxford, and the hand that now wrote thus, was to blacken in its flames, as the penalty for the same "imagination" for which Frith and the poor London tailor now suffered. But Frith's noblest vindication was to follow when the Fathers of the Anglican Church left a monument of their sorrow for the shedding of his innocent blood, in the order of the Communion Service, which closes with the very words on which Cranmer, with his brother bishops, had sat in judgment. "The natural body and blood of our Saviour Christ are in heaven, and not here, it being against the truth of Christ's natural body to be at one time in more places than one." The argument, and the words in which it is expressed, are Frith's.[2]

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[1] Foxe, v. 132.

[2] Froude, i. 479. This may be seen in Foxe's intensely interesting account of Frith's case, vol. v. 1—17.

So, in these years, all over England, went on the battle for human freedom. Men of low degree and men of whom the universities were proud fought it for us with a like heroism, though they knew beforehand that we must pass over their bodies to victory. But there could be no question of that victory in the end, for fidelity, even to death, was a protest for the truth and against error, which carried with it an invincible grandeur, no less weakening the enemies of light than it mightily increased its friends.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE POPE FINALLY DISOWNED.

THE divorce of Catherine and the marriage of Anne Boleyn, were steps so grave that no one knew what would be the result. Pope Clement threatened to launch all Europe against Henry, and the Emperor was as fierce.[1] The Pope was furious at the completeness of the apparent defection from him, for even the clergy had voted for the divorce by 263 votes to 19, and Fisher alone stood out against it among the bishops.

Every one, however, felt that this outward compliance with Henry's imperious will, hid a deep-seated opposition to the course on which he had entered. At heart, the mass of the clergy and all the monks and friars were still for the Pope, and might be expected to use their influence for the old state of things. The Roman Consistory hastened to pronounce the new marriage invalid, and to order Anne to be put away, and this decree was sent to be posted up at Dunkirk. Henry could not tell that the ground would not sink from under his feet at the next step he might take.

Meanwhile, on the 1st June, Anne was crowned, while Frith lay waiting death three weeks later. There never had been such a day for pageants and festivities. It was well for the new queen that the future was hidden from her.

[1] Herbert, 385. Strype, i. 45.

On the 7th of September, the hope that Henry had cherished of a son, was once more dashed by the birth of a daughter—afterwards Queen Elizabeth—and though she was presently created Princess of Wales, the disappointment marks the beginning of the unhappy mother's loss of favour. Yet, for the time, things promised well for the New Opinions. With Cranmer and Cromwell supported by Anne, the Reformers took heart, and, indeed, in too many cases, let their zeal outrun their discretion. Latimer was preaching boldly at Bristol, but the priests got a prohibition against his doing so in the diocese of Worcester, and his friends and opponents came to such fierce and protracted controversy, that Cromwell had to interfere to preserve the peace.

On the news of the sentence by the Pope, Henry at once answered by an appeal to a General Council, which, in itself, was a direct attack on the Papal claims. Bonner and Gardiner were then at Marseilles, to which the Pope had come to marry his niece Catherine de Medici—the future planner of the Massacre of St. Bartholomew—to the Duke of Orleans, and handed Henry's appeal to his Holiness. With it, also, they delivered a second of the same kind from Cranmer, and Bonner followed them up with more than his wonted audacity.

Meanwhile the Pope had succeeded in breaking up the close alliance of England and France. The reception of Anne Boleyn by Francis in the autumn before had identified him with Henry's cause, and had been the ratification of an agreement between the two, that, if the divorce were not granted, France and England should together secede from Rome. Henceforth this was not to be. Francis continued friendly in a faint way, but there was no more talk of joint secession. England was to pass through successive stages into a Protestant nation; France to go on to St. Bartholomew's Day, the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, the Great Revolution, and the Worship of Voltaire.

But the farce was not even yet played out. In December, three months after Elizabeth's birth, Henry was induced by

Francis, from whatever motive, to send a declaration to the Pope that if he would not finally pass sentence on him, he would not withdraw from the Holy See till impartial judges had examined his cause. Clement agreed to this proposal, if an authentic copy of it reached him by the 20th of March. A courier was forthwith sent off with one, but, happening to be detained two days beyond the time, the cardinals of the imperial faction insisted on sentence being passed at once. Thus Rome, by her indecent haste, had finally thrust England from her, and the rupture which seemed so likely to be avoided, was at last forced on Henry. With Imperialists illuminating Rome; cannon firing, and bonfires blazing to celebrate the Pope's final verdict; with himself declared excommunicated, and his subjects freed from allegiance, and with the Emperor engaging to invade England if obedience to the Papal commands were not paid within four months, Henry could only go on and complete the Revolution already so far advanced.

The insincerity of the clergy and religious orders in voting Catherine's marriage invalid was, in the meantime, showing itself in dangerous ways, for well-nigh every pulpit and cross in the land resounded with the coarsest attacks on Queen Anne, and bitter denunciations of the treatment of her "incomparable" rival.[1] Cranmer had, therefore, to forbid all preaching for a time, and warned the bishops to enforce the order. The position of things was indeed fit to appal him, and amply justified his unwillingness to accept promotion. In safe obscurity before, his advancement to the primacy had created bitter enemies, bent on thwarting his designs, and, if it might be, on bringing him to ruin. Gardiner, of Winchester, six years his senior, the illegitimate son of a *bishop*, was indignant that a mere king's chaplain should have been raised above himself, who already was a bishop and Secretary of State, and had been long employed in the king's service abroad and at home. With such

[1] Ellis's Original Letters. First series, vol. ii. 42, &c.

a man for a deadly foe, Cranmer knew he would have trouble and even danger, for though he had been a strong supporter of the divorce, and one of Catherine's judges, Gardiner was bitterly opposed to all reformation. With great abilities, extensive knowledge of State affairs, and high reputation as an ecclesiastical lawyer, he was ambitious, revengeful, and wholly unscrupulous. His theory of the Church, for the time, was the maintenance of the priestly system, with its exclusive claims and its ghostly powers, in all their completeness, official connection with Rome excepted, as not possible for the moment. His cunning was well supported by tact, and both were made dangerous by his tenacity. Henceforth, his career was a long intrigue to advance himself and his party, and to undo all that opposed either. Cranmer, Anne, Cromwell, and, in the end of Henry's reign, Queen Catherine Parr, found him their mortal enemy, because of their favouring Protestantism. He brought Cromwell to the block, and would have done the same with Cranmer and the last queen, but for Henry's acuteness. Anne Boleyn also may be numbered among his victims. The burnings of "heretics," after his return from Italy in 1531, were mainly due to his goading Henry to show his orthodoxy by such proofs. He would not hear of the Bible being circulated in English, nor of any abatement whatever of the worst corruptions of the old Church system. It was believed, in fact, that he had been secretly reconciled to the Pope, and had admitted Henry's supremacy only in form, which seems more than likely, since he at once became the great champion of Rome, when the chance offered, under Queen Mary.

Nor can we adequately realize, at this distance of time, the perilous convulsion through which society was then passing, by the rupture of the national relations with the Pope. Cranmer felt that the winds had been let loose, and no one knew what might not perish in the wild storm. The supremacy of the Pope, however disputed in statutes, had for centuries been accepted as a fundamental principle of religion. Wherever it

had been challenged on the Continent, society had been well-nigh dissolved, and the future was even darker than the present. The English throne, moreover, had risen to an unchecked despotism, before which, since the days of Henry VII., neither the courts nor Parliament, now cowed into slavish compliance, were any protection. The fall of Wolsey had struck terror into all hearts; for if the property and life of one so great were at the mercy of a royal word, no one was safe. Cranmer, gentle, kindly, patient, forgiving, and only too often wanting in firmness, had to guide the Church as he best might beneath a sword hung over him by a hair.

An incident now occurred which showed the perils of the times. So long as nine years before this, that is in 1525, a girl at Canterbury had been declared the subject of miraculous visions and revelations, "by the power of God and our Lady," and a very profitable business had been done by the priests ever since, from the crowds of pilgrims from all parts of England who resorted to her, to see one so highly favoured. The poor girl was in fact epileptic, but, under the manipulation of some priests, she unfortunately took advantage of this misfortune to carry out a system of deception which in the end grew to be a political danger. She was reported to have trances, and to have seen in them many strange visions and revelations, of heaven, hell, and purgatory, and had spoken much in confirmation of pilgrimages, trentals,[1] hearing masses, and confession, and many such things. In her discourses on these a voice was heard coming from her body—that is, she used ventriloquism to work on the credulity of her audience. After a time she had become a nun, at Canterbury, and her revelations had proceeded to discuss the king's marriage, the great heresies and schisms in the land, and the injuries done to the liberty of the Church. She had even written to the Pope and to Wolsey, calling on them in the name of God to stop the marriage with Anne

[1] Thirty masses for the dead, said on thirty successive days.

Boleyn, if they would avoid divine vengeance. Mary Magdalen was said to have sent her a letter from heaven, written in golden characters. At last she had ventured to predict that Henry would not live six months after his new marriage; that a plague beyond any before would be sent on England, and that the king should then be destroyed.

It marks the superstition of the age and the inflammable state of public feeling that the ravings of this impostor obtained wide popularity. Not only Wolsey, but Warham, More, Fisher, and many others of note listened to her, more or less, while not only all Kent, but well-nigh all England, was excited about her. But the monks, under whose pupilage she acted, were to find that they had carried their imposture too far,[1] for a preliminary inquiry was ordered, and the matter was brought before Parliament at its sitting, in January, 1534.

The first act of the new session had reference to the social evils of the times, and explains much that has been unjustly ascribed to the changes in religion. The old troubles between the peasantry and the landowners, which had disturbed England for centuries, were growing more embittered. In 1514, a petition had been presented to Henry to consider the dearness and scarcity of all food, which increased daily, "from the great and covetous misusage of farms. Gentlemen, merchants, adventurers, clothworkers, goldsmiths, butchers, tanners, and others, were striving to buy up more land than they could cultivate. Some held as many as sixteen farms, on each of which there used to be good houses, and from three to six ploughs." "When each man had one farm," the petitioners went on to say, "and cultivated that well, food was plenty and cheap, for man and beast, but 'the engrossers' had made a great change. Where there had been a town of twenty or thirty houses, they were now decayed, and all the people clean gone, and the churches down." An Act had accordingly been passed to remedy this evil, but, like

[1] See Cranmer's account, Strype, i. 337.

all attempts to legislate against inevitable change, it proved a failure. A second act was passed in 1516, and now, in 1534, a third. Many, it was said, "fell daily to theft, robbery, or other inconvenience, or pitifully died of hunger and cold, while a single farmer kept as many as twenty-four thousand sheep." Widespread misery, in fact, prevailed throughout the shires; multitudes, turned out of their houses, wandered hither and thither starving, and not a few, in their desperation, took to robbery and violence. In spite of pitiless severity crime had never so abounded.

The affair of the Nun of Kent was next discussed, and speedily settled. The unfortunate woman herself, and six monks who had been the chief agents in her impostures, were sentenced to death, and were hanged at Tyburn, on the 20th April. More and Fisher had been arrested for "misprision of treason" in connection with the matter—that is, for having known and yet concealed the treason, but More was pardoned, through the kind offices of Cromwell, on his explaining the circumstances of his relations to the nun. Fisher, on the other hand, refusing to express any regret, was sentenced, with Catherine's confessor, to forfeiture of goods and imprisonment. Others who had been implicated were pardoned at the intercession of Queen Anne, and Fisher, whom Henry was unwilling to injure, was left at liberty. A movement which had threatened to lead to a general rising was thus happily crushed. The friars who were to have stirred up the people everywhere to revolt, at a signal given by the nun, found themselves discovered and watched, and even Catherine and her daughter, who had linked themselves with the plot, in the hope of driving Anne from her position, felt themselves compromised. Mary, indeed, was transferred to the household of the young princess Elizabeth, to keep her from further tampering with her father's enemies.

Meanwhile the Revolution advanced rapidly under the king's dictation and Cromwell's leadership. On the 9th March, while the courier was on his way to Rome, bearing Henry's submission to the Pope, a bill was introduced severing for ever all connection

with Rome, and it was passed on the 20th, without a division. By this Act all payments of any kind to Rome were made illegal. The stream of wealth thus cut off from the Italian court had flowed, deep and full, for centuries, but henceforth was dried up at the source.

The payment to the Pope of the first year's income of all benefices and dioceses, which had already been conditionally forbidden, was definitely prohibited; the payment of the Pope's tithes; the heavy consecration fees at each bishop's installation; the vast sums spent on appeals to the Roman courts; those given for dispensations of all kinds—to marry within forbidden degrees, to admit a priest's *son* to a benefice, to break an oath, and a hundred things besides; the taxes levied by legates; the fees paid at the death of bishops; the huge sums paid for infinite sorts of rules, briefs, and instruments of many kinds; the payment of Peter's pence; and payments for provisions, pensions, and bulls, were all things of the past.[1]

All judicial connection with Rome had been already severed by the Act forbidding appeals, and now all financial connection with it was likewise ended, and the Revolution, so far, stood complete. To make it formally so, the act further proceeded to take away all power from the Pope in England. He had claimed to set aside the law of Scripture, in order to uphold Catherine's marriage, and to ignore the laws of the land whenever he chose to consider them as trenching on his ecclesiastical rights. It was now, therefore, enacted that "as none could dispense with the laws of God, so the king and Parliament alone could dispense with the laws of the land, and that all licenses or dispensations formerly in use should for the future be granted by the two archbishops." All powers claimed by the Bishop of Rome within the realm were henceforward to cease, and be transferred to the crown. But that the Pope might have time to yield if he chose, three months were allowed before the Act should come into force.

[1] Fuller's Church History, ii. 64.

With all this revolutionary legislation, however, there was so little idea of any change in religion itself that the Commons took care to declare that they did not intend to alter any article of the Catholic faith of Christendom. They meant to retain their spiritual relation to the Pope while independent of him in everything political and self-governing as a Church: to separate, as I have already said, from the *Court*, but not from the *Church* of Rome. One clause in this great Act was of supreme importance for the future in another direction. All the exemptions enjoyed by monasteries were continued, but they were made subject to the king's visitation, and power was given him to examine and reform all indulgences and privileges they enjoyed. Its passing was their doom.

An Act fixing the succession to the throne was only a necessary sequel to the king's marriage with Anne, to prevent the risk of a future civil war. Such a statute was passed accordingly, but an extension of the law of treason was added to it worthy of an Oriental despotism. All were required to swear to it, and the refusal to do so, or even the utterance of a chance word "to the slander of the marriage," was made a capital offence. The confusion and dangers of the time might excuse anxiety to guard against disloyalty, but only a slavish Parliament and a king who reigned by terror could have sanctioned a law so vague and so ensnaring.

The tyranny of the Church courts had long outraged the nation, but a special instance of cruelty on the part of Stokesley, Bishop of London, at last brought some abatement of it. Hitherto the bishops could commit any one on the mere suspicion of heresy, which was very loosely defined. Henceforth, no one was to be committed on such a charge except on a presentment made by two witnesses: none were to be accused for speaking against matters grounded only on the Canon or Church law: bail was to be taken for the accused, and they were to be tried in open court. Relapsed heretics, who would not recant, were still, however, to be burned, on the king's writ being obtained.

The public mind was more and more revolting from the cruelty of the bishops.

The great Act forbidding all future payments to Rome embodied details of the highest moment on other points, for it rendered necessary a change in the mode of nominating bishops to vacant sees. No question had been more hotly disputed in the past between the popes and the crown, until it was fixed by the Statute of Provisors, passed in 1351, under Edward III., that "the king and other lords shall present unto benefices of their own or their ancestors' foundation, and not the Bishop of Rome," and this had been confirmed in 1389, by a statute of Richard II. From these dates the only power exercised by the popes in the election of bishops had been through the bulls needed for their consecration. In Cranmer's case there had been eleven of these, each charged at lawyer's prices, and had these been withheld it would have kept the see unfilled.

The mode of election had, however, with this abatement, been long exactly what it is now. The king issued a mock permission to the Cathedral Chapter to choose a bishop, but required them to accept the person named by him, under penalty of a premunire, in case they delayed beyond twenty days—a course the only palliation of which was its practical working.

A sequel was now added to the Act which abolished payments to Rome, dispensing thenceforward with any bulls from the Pope in episcopal elections, and restricting the details of choice and consecration exclusively to England. "The Bishop of Rome" was not to be asked, thenceforth, for palls, or bulls, or in any way recognized in this matter.

Many English bishoprics had, till now, been given by the kings to Italian cardinals, as bribes for their influence at Rome. Thus, those of Salisbury and Worcester were now held by Cardinals Campeggio and Ghinucci, who, residing permanently in Italy—to use Gibbon's words in another case—never forgot they had a salary to receive, but only that they had a duty to perform. These sees were now declared vacant, to be filled, after a time,

through Queen Anne's influence, by two reforming bishops, Shaxton and Latimer. Their election when it came was a great help to Cranmer, and Cromwell could breathe more freely when he had at least some sympathy on the episcopal bench.

The hollowness of the submission of the Church had been strikingly seen, though seven bishops and fourteen abbots had sat in Parliament, but the revolution went on in spite of all opposition. Henry had even let a play be acted before him in which the Pope and his cardinals were ridiculed, and a bishop had preached every Sunday at St. Paul's Cross, that the Pope had now no authority in England. Convocation, also, was forthwith to receive another humiliation, of which its members were themselves required to be the agents. An Act dictated by the king, was presented to them, and of course passed, cancelling all causes ecclesiastical in any way contrary to the statute law or the king's prerogative. Quietly done, it was yet the close of a struggle between Rome and England that had lasted for centuries. Henceforward the civil authority stood supreme in the land over both clergy and laity. The reign of the Church as an independent power, side by side with that of the Crown, had followed the rule of the Pope, in its fall, and Cromwell could congratulate Henry that there was, at last, only one law and one king in England.

Latimer, now a great popular favourite, had come to London in the early spring, from his Wiltshire rectory, to preach before Henry on the Wednesdays during Lent,[1] thanks to Queen Anne and Cranmer, and was thus in town during part at least of the sitting of Parliament, much to the mortification of his old enemy Stokesley.

Commissioners were now appointed to administer the oath of allegiance to the new succession, "at the pleasure of the king," to whom they thought fit, especially the priests and regulars.[2]

[1] February 2nd to April 1st.

[2] The monks and friars who lived, or professed to live, by their founder's rule—*Latin,* regula.

Deputy commissioners also were forthwith added for different districts, and among these Latimer was sent off to administer the oath in the west. The country at large was very excited. For four years back, at least, every one had been discussing the Pope's power, or the premunire of the clergy, and now there were added the sweeping Acts of the last session of Convocation and Parliament. The world in which men had lived was breaking up under their feet, and no one knew what would come next. Only the supremacy of the Pope was left; would Henry dare to assail that?

But the times were too grave to allow hesitation, and the king's spirit was roused by the dangers that Rome had threatened to bring on him. Knowing no fear, he met defiance with defiance. The Act cutting off all payments from the Pope and all connections with him had till now been suspended, but was made law at once. Convocation was required to make a declaration that the Pope had no more power in England than any other bishop. The Observant Friars at Canterbury and Greenwich, who had been especially daring in their disloyalty, had their houses suppressed, and were themselves distributed in different monasteries, where they could be watched. The fleet was hurriedly made ready, the garrisons on the coast strengthened, and all preparations made to repel any hostile force.

Meanwhile, the Oath of Allegiance to the new succession was sternly administered, and taken without hesitation by most, though it carried with it the acceptance of the whole Revolution. Strange to say, even the clergy and abbots made no scruple; of the bishops, only Fisher refused it; of the laity, only one of eminence—Sir Thomas More. Both Fisher and More were willing to swear loyalty to the succession as appointed by Parliament, for they held that to be within parliamentary power, but they could not assent to the invalidation of Catherine's marriage, which carried with it the denial of the divine power of the Pope.[1] The scruples of Henry, long years ago,

[1] Strype, i. 337, 339.

had kindled an ardour for the Papacy in More even keener than that which he had himself once sought to restrain in his master, and no persuasion could induce him to take the oath. Cranmer and Cromwell alike strove to move him, but in vain, and the former, always gentle and kindly, finding the attempt hopeless, sought to save him by proposing that both he and Fisher should be excused taking the whole oath, since they were willing to swear to the succession itself. But he pleaded with one who had neither gratitude nor pity; one to whom past services only seemed to justify still greater demands, and whose appalling self-worship never suspected that any rights but his own existed. Cranmer urged that the support of two such men would strengthen the new succession in the country and in Europe, but Henry was indignant at the suggestion, and they were ordered to be committed to the Tower. More's family were, however, left in the enjoyment of their property, and Fisher's bishopric was not taken from him.

But whatever his personal faults, Henry was a man of splendid abilities, sustained by unconquerable energy and resolution. In such a crisis few could have led England with equal success, and so little commotion. The threatened invasion by Charles had as yet been only an alarm. There were, indeed, rumours of troops being raised for it in Germany, and Ireland had burst into rebellion. It would be of benefit to embarrass the Emperor by an alliance with the German Lutherans, and an envoy was therefore sent to the Elector of Saxony, to sound him on the subject. But Henry's ideas of reformation were not those of the Germans. With him it was only a change of Pope with a more hated because less natural tyranny over opinion. They wanted liberty for the mind, not a change of jailors, and would not listen to his overtures.

It was on the last day of March, 1534, that the Acts of the secular legislature received the final assent of Convocation, and this was speedily followed by declarations and subscriptions from the Chapters, the Universities, and other

Ecclesiastical Bodies, to the effect that "the Bishop of Rome has not any greater jurisdiction conferred on him by God on this realm of England than any foreign bishop." Thus Church and State formally concurred in the revolt from the Papacy, and in the abolition of every trace of its authority among us.

The established clergy, indeed, had acquiesced, at least outwardly, in all that had hitherto been done. Several bishoprics were vacant, in consequence of the quarrel with Rome, but six bishops had sanctioned by their votes every blow struck at the Church. Fourteen abbots had been generally present in the House of Lords, though the number of temporal peers who attended was only somewhat over forty. Both bishops and abbots had reduced Catherine's title to that of Princess Dowager of Wales, and had ratified the marriage with Anne Boleyn. The Bill to subject the clergy to the king as their supreme head had been read three times in one day, and passed without a division. After the vacancies in the bishoprics had been filled up, sixteen bishops commonly sat in the House without offering opposition. The oath had been taken freely by clergy and laity alike. The universities and the Convocation of both provinces were equally for the king and against the Pope, so far as votes and swearing were concerned.

But this calm was only on the surface. Underneath, the ecclesiastical world was profoundly disloyal. The idea of schism is terrible to some minds, even after three centuries, but in Henry's day it seemed utterly subversive of all religion, as the rending of the seamless robe of Christ; the breaking off from the true vine; the forsaking of that divine foundation—the chosen rock—on which the Church had been built by Christ It appeared impossible to the mass of the clergy that such a state of things could continue. They might comply, under compulsion, with Henry's commands or new laws, but their hearts were with Rome. Hence the pulpits and the confessional became, everywhere, centres of fierce sedition, which it was necessary to control. All licenses to preach were, there-

fore, revoked, till friar and priest alike had appeared before the bishops, and, after taking the oath, had been warned not to speak against the king, the laws, or the succession. Spies had long been employed by the bishops in great numbers to track the poor Reformers, and now supplied a means of which Cromwell freely made use, to expose the shortcomings of ecclesiastics. A royal proclamation was issued, that all manner of prayers, rubrics, canons of mass books, and all other books wherein the Bishop of Rome was named, should utterly be abolished, eradicated, and rased out, and his name and memory never more be remembered, except to his contumely and reproach. The bishops were to instruct the clergy, and they the people, respecting the changes that had taken place. A sermon was to be preached each Sunday at St. Paul's Cross, on the Pope's Usurpation, and every pulpit was to enlighten the people, week after week, on the same subject. All who had authority, and even the heads of households, were to make it the theme of conversation with those under them.

Nor was it left to any one's choice to do so. All sheriffs were required to see the royal commands duly carried out.

But the instructions of the king were not limited to denunciations of the Pope. The inevitable widening of the gulf which had opened was already seen. No preacher was, henceforth, to make the pulpit a safe opportunity for vilifying his brethren, but must content himself with "preaching the Scripture and words of Christ purely, sincerely, and justly, not mixing them with men's institutions, or making men believe that the force of God's law and man's law was the like." Still more, on purgatory, the worship of saints and relics, the marriage of the clergy, justification by faith, pilgrimages, and miracles, they were to keep silence for a whole year.[1] To help bishops and priests alike, the details of these "injunctions" were embodied in a printed book circulated among them.

[1] Burnet's Collectanea, p. 447.

For the moment, the Reformation was advancing beyond merely political and ecclesiastical questions. A book issued to the people, under the name of "Henry's Primer," as published with his authority,[1] showed a freedom in dealing with Church matters that must have galled men like Stokesley and Gardiner to the quick. The "Primer" was, in effect, the original of our English Prayer Book, issued for the first time by authority.

Such Primers, or books of prayer for the Hours of the Church, from *Prime* onwards, had been in existence for centuries. A manuscript of one in English is still extant of the date of 1430.[2] But it must have been an exception to the rule, for it is the only Church book of devotions of an early date not in Latin. The Church, indeed, had enjoined the teaching of the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and the Hail, Mary! in English, even from the days of Archbishop Egbert, in A.D. 731; but how utterly the often-repeated injunction had been neglected before the Reformation was only too vividly shown by the multitudes whom bishops like Longland or Fitzjames hunted to prison or the stake, for no other crime than knowing, or teaching a child, either one or the other.

The Prymer of the Salisbury Use, as it was called, was practically the only one in circulation when the King's Primer was published. An edition of it had been published in Paris as long before as 1490, and six more had been issued up to 1534;[3] but the book, as a whole, is in Latin, with verses of English rhyme below the pictures which illustrate it, and a short English addition at the end—part of which, called "The Psalter of Jesus," is praised as invaluable, from its repeating the name of Jesus 355 times. Hilsey, Bishop of Rochester,[4] Latimer's friend, and formerly a Black Friar at Bristol, had been

[1] The first edition was published in 1534. There is a copy in the Bodleian Library, at Oxford, but not in the British Museum.

[2] Maskell's Monumenta Ritualia Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ, vol. ii 46, ff.

[3] See the editions in the British Museum catalogue, and in Lowndes.

[4] Died 1538.

set by Cromwell to draw up a "Manual of Prayers" at a very early date, though it was not published till 1539, after Hilsey's death. In the preface, however, the bishop characterizes the "sundry and divers sorts of Primers heretofore set forth" as being "in many things superstitious and derogatory to the true honour of God," a verdict which the Official Primer of 1534 incidentally illustrates and confirms, by condemning "certain prayers" in them, "to be made before the image of our Lady of Pity," which were said to secure that he who repeated them "should see her visage, and be warned both of the day and hour of his death, before he departed out of this world." "In those books," it goes on to say, "men had learned with much foolish superstition, and as great scrupulosity, to make rehearsal of their sins by heart," thinking that would secure forgiveness. Moreover, "they abounded, every place, with infinite errors and perilous prayers, slanderous both to God and all His holy saints." Such was the authoritative account in Henry's own Primer of those in circulation at its appearance in 1534.

The contents of this first reformed Prayer Book are necessarily of great interest. They consist of An Exposition of the Ten Commandments, another, of the Creed, A General Confession of Sins, Instruction how to Pray, A Brief Explanation of Our Lord's Prayer, The Ave Maria, A Prayer to God as the Creator, The Office of all States—that is, prayers suited for different relations and responsibilities—A Short Treatise on Good Works, An Exhortation to Expect the Cross and to Bear it, Matins and Even Song—that is, Morning and Even Prayer—in English, The Seven Penitential Psalms in English, A Litany in English—in which the invocations of the Virgin, the Angels, the Apostles, and the Saints are retained, An Exposition of the 51st Psalm, A Prayer to Our Lord Jesus, The Passion of Our Saviour Christ in ten sections, in the words of the Gospels; Instructions for Children, including Morning and Evening Prayers, Graces, &c.; A Dialogue between a Father and Son, being a Plain Exposition of the Creed and Ten Command-

ments; A Prayer for Softening and Converting the Heart; A Prayer for the Restoring of Christ's Poor Church, being parts of chapters 63 and 64 of Isaiah; The Song of Hannah; The Prayer of Daniel; A Prayer to Appease God's Wrath; The Dirige or Dirge in English—that is, the Office said for the Souls of the Dead; The Commendations in English—an Office in which all Christian Souls are commended to God; The Psalms on the Passion of Christ, beginning with the 22nd; The Prayer of Jonah; and finally, A Goodly Exposition of the 30th Psalm, made by Jerome of Ferrara, and translated into English. Altogether, it was larger than our present Book of Common Prayer.

The new wine attempted to be put into the old bottles of the moribund Church, had thus already burst them. Cromwell had induced Henry to issue a book, and to let it be freely bought by all, as the official manual of devotion and religion, which was gall and wormwood to Gardiner and the Romish party. Its being entirely in English was offensive enough, but its comments on the Romish services it necessarily retained were still worse to bear. It denounced the worship paid to the Virgin as trenching on the divine rights. It warned men to "take heed that no one put his sure trust and hope in the Mother of God, or her merits," and that "we ought none otherwise to praise and love her, than as one which has received such goodness, without her own deserving, of the pure liberality and favour of God." It joined to the Romish litany a solemn caution that "no commandments of Holy Scripture teach us that we must of necessity pray to our Blessed Lady or to the saints," and added, "though it is true we must needs have a peace-maker, or mediator, which is His (God's) Son." Men were cautioned against "the superstitious carrying about them of images, painted papers, carved crosses, &c., to help them to behold the Passion of Christ . . . thinking themselves to be safe thereby from fire, water, and other perilous jeopardy." It spoke roundly against the preaching of the day as not to profit. If it inserted the Office for the souls of the dead, it added—that it would be

much better for men to pray for themselves while alive, and that "there is nothing in the Office taken out of Scripture that makes any more mention of the souls departed than doth the tale of Robin Hood." The very title was a sign of a new age having begun, for it ran thus—"A Primer in English, with certain Prayers and Godly Meditations, very necessary for all people that understand not the Latin tongue. Also an exposition of the 51st Psalm." Whatever the "conspirators" think of the palmy days before the Reformation, its contemporaries clearly thought very little of them indeed. Next year, 1535, the Primer was republished in a second edition, with the king's special authorization.[1] Who compiled this invaluable help to the Reformation is not known. England is indebted for it, as for so much else, to Cromwell, who doubtless employed some unnamed Reformer to prepare it. Cranmer certainly was not its author, for he did not see it till it had been printed. But the leaven, though only a handful, was at last cast into the mass of the English population, and could not but spread. Edition after edition showed that the Primer was doing its work.

The evidences of a widespread determination on the part of the priests and friars to bring back again, if possible, the Pope's authority had meanwhile accumulated. Their treason was now to be met with a terrible sternness that can only be palliated, in any measure, by the imminent peril of the times. Rome is harmless enough to-day, but the horrors of the Spanish Inquisition, the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, and the long civil wars in France; the constant plots against Elizabeth, the incident of the Armada, the horrors inflicted by Philip on the Netherlands, and the terrible agony of the Thirty Years' War in Germany, help us to understand the attitude in which Henry and his people must have stood to the Papacy in these days of its power. Nor was its ability to let loose war on rebellious nations, or to stir up plots in their borders, its only or even its

[1] Strype's Eccles. Mem. i. c. 31.

most dreaded aspect. Its hold on the superstitions of mankind clothed it in imaginary terrors which it needed a moral courage far rarer than mere physical bravery to cast off.

Parliament met on the 3rd of November, and its first act showed that the king would carry out the Revolution to the end, according to his conception of it. The clergy in Convocation had, three years before, declared him supreme head of the Church of England, and now an Act made the title part of the law of the land, and thus definitely proclaimed the independence of the nation, as well ecclesiastically as civilly, of any foreign jurisdiction. But Henry, ever anxious to show orthodoxy, was careful to have a document prepared, to accompany the Act, deprecating the idea that "he should take any spiritual power from spiritual men that is given to them by the Gospel." He did not "pretend to take any powers from the successors of the apostles that was given to them by God." Nor was there any intention "to decline or vary from the congregation of Christ's Church in anything concerning the articles of the Catholic faith." To Henry the only change was, that he was now Pope as well as king—to be obeyed, in his every word, as both.

Another Act followed, which no emergency could even palliate. Any person "wishing, willing, or desiring, by words or writing, or by craft imagining, inventing, practising, or attempting any bodily harm to the king, the queen, or heirs apparent, or depriving them or any of them of the dignity, title, or name of their royal estates, or calling the king a heretic, tyrant, schismatic, or the like (as the friars and monks were doing)," was, with his aiders and abettors, to be held guilty of high treason. Under the cloak of law this was simply the extinction of all law: the handing over the lives of all Englishmen to the unchecked despotism of the throne. It is useless to blame Cromwell for such a statute, any more than for the tyranny before and after its passing. Henry, as long ago as 1520, when the Duke of Buckingham was to be legally murdered, had shown that he was himself the creator of the reign of terror, when he threatened to

behead a leading member of the House if his bill were not carried at once.[1] He was only twenty-nine then: now, he was forty-three, and had been growing worse all along.

Another act of servility followed, in the transference to Henry of the first-fruits—that is, the first year's income of all Church benefices on a new presentation; and of the tenths—that is, the tenth part of the yearly value of all ecclesiastical livings. Both taxes, scandalous in their oppression of the poorer clergy, had been wrung from England by the Pope: both were now ordered to be paid to his royal successor. It was not till Queen Anne's day that both tenths and first-fruits were once more restored to the Church, for the augmentation of poor livings, under the name of Queen Anne's bounty. The clergy had gone against the Pope to escape these extortions, but they were soon to find that the greed of Rome was to be outdone by that of their lay supreme head. Commissioners were forthwith appointed to re-value all benefices, that Henry might make as much out of his new revenue as possible.

An Act was also passed for the appointment of twenty-six suffragan bishops, but it was soon allowed to fall into abeyance. A subsidy to pay the cost of the last war with Scotland, to fortify Calais, and to put down the Irish revolt, completed the work of Parliament, which did not meet again for more than a year.

On the day after Parliament adjourned Cranmer took a fresh step in Church reform, destined to affect the whole future of England, by inducing the clergy to petition that the Bible might be translated into English for the use of the people. The English Church in its earlier and purer days had favoured the circulation of the Scriptures in the language of the people. Aldhelm, Bishop of Sherborne, in A.D. 700, Eadfrid, Bishop of Lindisfarne, Caedmon, a monk of Whitby, the Venerable Bede, Alcuin, the friend of Charlemagne, King Alfred, Bishop Aelfric, and others, had translated portions of them into Old English,

[1] See page 107.

before the Norman Conquest. That event, however, threw the language for a time into such confusion that the Creed and some other parts of the Services of the times are found in French, English, and Latin. Still, there were fresh attempts made at Scripture translation. The whole Bible, indeed, was never put into English, but Gospels, Psalters, and separate Books, of various periods, from the Conquest to the days of Wycliffe, are still in existence. The great Reformer and his fellow-labourers have the immortal honour of giving the nation the first complete English Bible.

But the early glory of the Church had passed away before Wycliffe was born, and, as we have seen, his zeal for spreading the knowledge of the Scriptures not only met no support from the clergy of his day, but drew down on his labours a bitter proscription. To have a shred of his Bible was fatal to the possessor.

Cranmer could, therefore, say with strict correctness, speaking in 1540, that it was not "much above one hundred years since Scripture was accustomed to be read in the vulgar tongue in this realm." The Convocation, led by Arundel, had, in 1408, proscribed Wycliffe's and Purvey's version, but no other translation had been undertaken by the Church, and Tyndale's proposal to translate even the New Testament only—the first made since Arundel's day—met with such persecution that he had to flee to the Continent to escape the stake.

Even the friends of the New Learning, indeed, were alarmed at the prospect of any part of the Scriptures being in the hands of the people. In the autumn of 1526, immediately after Tyndale's Testament had reached England, a meeting of the leading bishops, held under the presidency of Wolsey, resolved unanimously that the obnoxious book should be publicly burned wherever it was discovered. Wolsey, always liberal, and shrewder than his brethren, would have let it be circulated, but even as easy a nature as that of Tunstal was so much alarmed, that he urged its strict prohibition. Henry, in consequence, had ordered it to be publicly burned, as often as found.

But the utter failure of all attempts to suppress Tyndale's version, and the large importation of Lutheran books, led Henry, in 1530, to call another meeting of the leading men of the Church and the universities. "He had summoned them," he said, "because it had come to his hearing, that report is made by divers and many of his subjects, that it were to all men, not only expedient, but also necessary, to have in the English tongue both the Old Testament and the New."

The spirit of the past, however, was too strong in the clergy to let them sanction such a proposal, and it was consequently decided by them unanimously "that it is not necessary the said Scripture be in the English tongue, and in the hands of the people, and that, having respect to the malignity of this present time, with the inclination of the people to erroneous opinions, the translation of the New Testament and the Old into the vulgar tongue of English should rather be the occasion of continuance or increase of errors among the said people, than any benefit or commodity toward the wealth of their souls."

One step, however, at least, had been gained, for Henry made known that he "intended to provide that the Holy Scripture shall be, by great, learned, and Catholic persons, translated into the English tongue," when the dangers arising from heretical opinions should have passed away.

Thus things stood in December, 1534, and thus they might long have remained but for Cranmer. The resolution passed unanimously by Convocation four years before, showed that if the matter were left to the clergy, the nation could not hope for an English Bible. But Cranmer had succeeded in interesting Henry in the proposal to have a new translation, and a hint of their master's will was enough to make Convocation as readily support the undertaking as they had till now, when left to themselves, opposed it bitterly

An address was therefore voted by Convocation,[1] praying the

[1] 19th December, 1534.

king "to decree that the Scriptures should be translated into the vulgar tongue by some honest and learned men, to be nominated by the king." They were, however, to be "delivered to the people," only "according to their learning." The Church was to have the credit of having made an English Bible, but was far from intending it to be of general use. As still in Romish countries, it was to be entrusted only by special license, or at least discountenanced as unsafe for the multitude. Nor was this enough. A petition was added to the address, begging Henry to "decree and command that all his subjects in whose possession any books of suspect doctrine were, especially in the vulgar language, imprinted beyond or on this side of the sea, should be warned to bring them in before persons appointed by the king, within three months, under a certain pain to be limited by the king."

Whether Henry granted the authority or not is not known, but, in any case, Cranmer lost no time in setting the work of translation afoot. Beginning with the New Testament, he divided it into nine or ten parts, and sent one to the best scholars among the bishops and clergy, that they should "make a perfect correction" of it. The Old Testament, doubtless, was treated in the same way, and thus the great work which, more than anything, secured the triumph of the Reformation, was quietly begun. The true feeling of the old party to a people's Bible was hereafter to be shown, by the fact that Cranmer's scheme was so opposed that a private translation had after all to be accepted when it was desired to put Bibles into the Churches. Even now, indeed, the very men who affected to be so ready to act on Henry's intimation, that an English Bible must be made ready, were tracking Tyndale by their spies on the Continent, and were within a few months of bringing him to the fire, for no crime but that of having given his fellow-countrymen his magnificent English version of the New Testament.

CHAPTER XIV.

SUPPRESSION OF THE MONASTERIES.

CLEMENT VII. had died in September, 1534, and had been succeeded by Alexander Farnese, under the style of Paul III. Till his election Paul had been a stiff supporter of Henry, and it was hoped that he would continue honest to his convictions, now, when Pope. But the influences round him were soon to show that the wearer of the tiara is only free in name. As with Pius IX., the liberal impulses of the man were lost in the instinctive narrowness of the Pope.

Meanwhile the progress of Reform in Europe had been steady, if troubled. Charles V., in 1521, two years after he had been elected Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, at the age of nineteen, had sacrificed Germany to the Pope, for his own selfish ends. His rejection of German claims and interests at the Diet of Worms, in that year, in favour of the Papacy, had entailed on the Germans the unspeakable miseries of the Peasant Wars of 1525 and 1526, in which 100,000 of the country-people were killed, and had postponed the freedom and the unity of Germany for ten generations. To his after-quarrel with the Pope, however, had been due a permission granted in 1526, at the Diet of Spires, for each of the German princes to do as he chose in religious matters. Protestant States and national Churches, free from Rome, had thus risen. But the

Sacking of Rome in 1527, by the help of a German army, had been followed by a reconciliation between the emperor and the Pope, which resulted, in 1529, at the second Diet of Spires, in a revocation of the freedom granted in the first. Civil war between Protestant and Romish Germany was now inevitable, but had been delayed for the moment by the appearance of the Turk, that very year, under the walls of Vienna. It was no time for intestine feuds when the barbarian who had overrun half Christendom, threatened to extinguish what remained. The protest of the Lutherans in 1529, at Spires, against the decree revoking their religious liberty had given them the name of "Protestants," henceforth to distinguish all who had revolted, or should revolt, from Rome. The Diet of Augsburg, in 1530, had been called to enable the emperor to enforce submission to the Pope on the Protestant princes, but they had resisted bravely, and the Augsburg Confession had formulated only too rigidly the doctrines of the new faith. A few months given for consideration were to be followed, if the Protestants did not yield, by the emperor crushing heresy by arms, and against this peril the "League of Schmalkald" had been formed by those who were threatened. Another Turkish invasion, in 1532, had, alone, deferred once more, for a time, a religious war. Such was the outlook of German affairs in 1535.

In Denmark, Lutheranism was triumphant, and was destined to be finally established in 1536. The New Opinions had been introduced into Sweden in 1527, by Gustavus Vasa, the sole example, in an age when kings were everywhere trying to play the despot, of one whose crown was a symbol of patriotism and honour. In Switzerland religious war had followed agitation, and had only been ended, after terrible suffering, in 1531, Zuinglius, himself, dying in battle.

Nor was it only in Switzerland that civil commotion had followed the spread of the New Opinions. All Germany had been convulsed since 1525. The Rising of the Peasants had thrown a terrible odium with many, on the Reformation, for the

serfs had been led away by demagogues like Münzer, to mingle demands for what he called Christian liberty and equality and a community of goods with their more practical clamour for deliverance from social oppression, and hideous excesses had resulted from their ignorant fanaticism. Nor did the flames of this terrible insurrection die away with the quenching of the peasant war in seas of blood. In 1534 and 1535 new disorders had broken out. The principles of Münzer still survived, especially in Holland, among the Anabaptists, or Re-baptizers. Two of their most fanatical leaders, John Matthias, a baker of Haarlem, and a tailor, John Bockhold of Leyden, had wandered with a body of followers, in the beginning of 1534, to Münster, in Westphalia, and driven out the authorities, substituting others of their own, and proclaiming a community of goods. Every one had to bring all he possessed to a public treasury. The churches were stripped of their wealth: the images destroyed; and all the books in the city burned, the Bible excepted. Sensuality and tyranny soon developed themselves as results of the wild fanaticism in power. It was recognized as a right of Christian liberty to have more wives than one, John of Leyden setting the example by marrying three at once. He was erelong elected king of the whole earth, and proclaimed as about to set up again the throne of David. Apostles were sent out to subdue the world to the new king, but they were everywhere seized and put to death.

An army led by the expelled bishop and some temporal princes erelong tried to retake the town, but in August, 1534, they were driven back with great slaughter, nor was it till Münster had been thoroughly invested for many months and thus reduced to starvation, that it could be won by storming in the end of June, 1535. The deaths inflicted on the leaders, who were now taken, showed the terrible excitement of the times. They were carried round to various towns as a public show; then pinched with red-hot tongs till half killed, a red-hot dagger being finally plunged into their hearts. Their bodies were then

hung up in high cages from a church tower, in the market-place of Münster,[1] till they rotted away. Henry and England might well be cautious in letting loose the winds which elsewhere had raised such social tempests. A strong hand was evidently needed in such wild times to prevent the cry for reform degenerating into a license that would dissolve society.

All Europe, indeed, was in the throes of religious excitement. In Scotland Patrick Hamilton had introduced the New Opinions in 1527. At Geneva they were set up by Farel in this very year, 1535. In the Netherlands they were widely spread, and in Spain and Italy the Friends of Light had survived the utmost efforts to crush them. A cloud, as yet no bigger than a man's hand, had indeed risen, for in August, 1534, four months after the Papal authority had been set aside in England, Ignatius Loyola founded the Society of Jesus in his obscure room in Paris. But the portentous future of this fell conspiracy against God and man was yet hidden.

Meanwhile, the universal quickening of the public mind of Europe, which had begun with the Revival of Letters in the last century, spread and intensified in every direction. The middle ages had ended: modern history had begun. It astonishes one to notice in such catalogues as those of the Bodleian or British museums how many books poured from the press year by year. The discovery of hitherto unknown regions, also, was constantly stimulating the enterprise, and enlarging the conceptions, of mankind. Magellan had for the first time in history sailed round the world, between 1519 and 1521, and in the same two years Cortez had conquered Mexico. Francisco Pizarro had invaded Peru in 1529, and the empire of the Incas had by 1535 been added to the dominions of the Emperor Charles. Trade was yearly extending between England and the Continent. Skippers and merchants frequented the markets of Bergen, Dantzic, Lubeck, Antwerp, Lisbon, Cadiz, Barcelona, Genoa,

[1] Kohlrausch, Die Deutsche Geschichte, 434.

and Venice, and brought back the news, the books, and the opinions of Europe, as well as their freights.

It had doubtless been hoped that the Act of Supremacy, with its terrible schedule of penalties, would have secured submission; and the readiness with which the oath of succession, appointed by Parliament in the spring of 1534, had been taken, seemed to promise this result. But as the year passed it was evident that the monks and friars, and at least some of the parish clergy, were stirring up sedition under cover of their office. Still, Henry was unwilling to carry out the law; but with a fierce rebellion in Ireland, with the examples of insurrections and anarchy rising from religious questions on the Continent, and with the dim consciousness that rebellion was simmering in the masses of the peasantry through England, it is not to be wondered that stern measures were at last resolved upon.

The monks of the Charterhouse in London, an exceptionally worthy brotherhood, had shown great hesitation in taking the oath in the summer of 1534, but had remained untouched till the spring of 1535. In April of that year, however, the state of the country made a stricter policy inevitable. Monks and friars were everywhere denouncing the king, the queen, and the new supremacy. Some, doubtless, acted on conviction: many, in so corrupt a time, had certainly less worthy motives. Their bulls, immunities, privileges, and exemptions, were gone. They were dependent on Henry. The Pope could not send them indulgences, and relics were discredited. Christ Church Priory, in London—the richest in the city for land, plate, and jewels—had already been dissolved, and its site and precincts, with all its plate and lands, had been granted to Audley, then Speaker of the Commons, and now Chancellor; at all times a ready and unscrupulous instrument in any act of despotic violence or wrong on the part of the crown. Audley had, indeed, converted the priory into a residence for himself.[1] Other houses

[1] Fuller, ii. 229.

might follow. If the people could not be roused through the pulpit, the confessional, and private discourse, their cause was lost.

A proclamation, to put an end to this wide and dangerous conspiracy, was at last issued, requiring that all seditious persons be arrested, without bail, and information sent to the king's council. The Charterhouse monks, identified in the past with the doings of the Nun of Kent, and hence already under suspicion, were the first to suffer, and with them the priors of the two daughter houses of Axholm and Belville—apparently both in Lincolnshire. With the prior of the Charterhouse these two presented themselves before Cromwell in April, begging to be excused taking the oath, but they were sent to the Tower, with another monk from the affiliated house at Sion, where the Nun of Kent's plot had been planned. Cromwell tried hard to get them to accept the oath, but nothing could move them. As some had chosen to die for the freedom of thought, they had resolved to be martyrs to Church authority. Their trial speedily followed, and a few days after it they were executed at Tyburn. It was the first time that ecclesiastics had suffered without being previously degraded, and the sight of their dying in their frocks sent home to all, the fact that they had entered on a new era, in which the law of the land knew no distinction of priest and layman. The sanctity of the Churchmen, which had kept men in superstitious awe of them, had never received so deadly a blow. The pity is that so wholesome a lesson should have been enforced by severity so extreme for such an offence as refusing an oath. The bloodthirstiness of our laws till a very recent date, and the dangers of the times, are the only excuse.

Cromwell tried hard to save the rest of the brotherhood of the Charterhouse,[1] sending them books to win them over, but without success. Six weeks later three more, therefore, were arrested, tried, and hanged, but the rest secured themselves a respite by

[1] Bedyll to Cromwell, Ascension Day, 1535. Suppression of the Monasteries.

their steadfast determination. From time to time they were brought before the Council, but their enthusiasm was invincible. They boasted of having visions, in which they saw their prior next the angels in heaven, and heard "the angels of peace lament and mourn without measure."[1] Four were taken to Westminster to hear Tunstal, Bishop of Durham, preach against the Pope, but that also failed. At last some were sent to the north: others to Sion, under a loyal prior: others left in the Charterhouse under supervision. But the result was unhappy. Two were hanged next year for joining in open rebellion in Yorkshire: ten were sent to Newgate, where nine died of filth or fever, and the tenth was executed. Those still left at last gave way, and, having made a form of submission, were allowed to escape abroad.

It was a terrible thing in those days to lift the hand against priests, and even Henry was so awed at doing it that he ordered his court to cut their hair short in token of public mourning, he himself setting the example, and even letting his beard grow from this time unshaven.[2] But if the law were defied at such a time, from whatever motive, there could be no weakness. Submission meant peace in England; successful defiance, anarchy.

The distemper of the times and the fears that filled all men's hearts were strangely shown in this same month of May. Some Dutch Anabaptists had come to London, where nineteen men and six women of their number were arrested, and tried at St. Paul's for heresy. However innocent individually, the excesses of a branch of the sect to which they belonged had justly given it an evil name, as dangerous to society. Münster, at the moment, was still under the wild rule of their leaders, and alike in Germany, Switzerland, and Holland[3] they had mixed destructive political and social theories with their religious ideas, till they were everywhere regarded as social incendiaries of the

[1] Suppression of Monasteries, June, 1535. Stow, 571.

[2] Mosheim, iv. 450.

worst type. In an ignorant age great religious excitement inevitably leads to visionary extremes, but the persecution the Anabaptists were now bearing proved a baptism of fire, from which all that was good in their tenets came out purified by trial.

Heresy itself, to both Reformers and Romanists, was still a crime against the State. Protestants had not yet learned to apply their own principles, for men come only slowly to realize a new idea. Fourteen of the unfortunate foreigners were condemned. A man and a woman were burned at Smithfield, and the rest sent to other towns to be burned there, as warnings.

More and Fisher had now been a whole year in the Tower, and Henry determined that they too should submit or die. A deputation from the council, therefore, proceeded to their prison, to obtain an acknowledgment of the royal supremacy, but without effect. Fisher had been injudicious since his confinement, but nothing of the kind is alleged against More. Cromwell, as usual, did his best to save them, so that More wrote that "he tenderly favoured him." But the new Pope sealed their fate by making Fisher a cardinal. It was in vain that the poor old man refused the honour. Henry was furious, and declared, with brutal coarseness, that he would take care that he had no head to wear the hat when it came. On the 17th June, he was carried to Westminster Hall, for formal condemnation, and five days after, beheaded on Tower Hill. Seventy-six years of age, he might well have been left to die in the course of nature, but Henry was steadily sinking lower and lower in unredeemed ferocity. Eight days after, Sir Thomas More shared the same fate. Both he and Fisher died like Christian men; died bravely and nobly as those had died whom they had themselves sent to the stake for their convictions. Fisher had been chaplain and confessor to Henry's grandmother, Margaret, Countess of Richmond, and had held the see of Rochester since 1504, refusing to exchange it for a richer. He would not, he used to say, change his little old wife, to whom he had so long been wedded, for a

wealthier.[1] Yet he and More had been the cause of Frith's being burned,[2] and had thought it their duty to gather and burn in public all Tyndale's Testaments they could find. So strangely mingled is good and evil in man, however, that Fisher went to the scaffold with the Testament of Erasmus in his hands, and repeated aloud from it, once and again, as he moved towards the block, "This is life eternal, to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." A man of the old school, he was willing to go as far as the New Learning, at its first rise, proposed, but had become so timid and extreme a conservative when the age moved faster than he wished, that he led the resistance to the bill of 1529, which proposed even such slight reforms as the restriction of non-residence and pluralities, and the regulation of fees for wills and burials. The Greek or Latin Testament was fit enough in his own hands as a priest, but an English Testament in the hands of the people was not to be endured.

More's character shows the same mingling of light and shade. So good a father, that his daughter, long years after his death, went to her grave with his head laid on her breast; he gloried, in his epitaph, composed by himself, in being "a scourge to thieves, murderers, and heretics." Tolerant beyond his age in his Utopia, he lived to have martyrs cry from the flames, "The Lord forgive Sir Thomas More." Yet he no doubt fancied he was serving God, even when consigning a poor man to the fire for owning a Testament, or refusing to worship the wafer.

The deaths of Fisher and More sent a shock through Europe. That a cardinal should have been beheaded infuriated the Pope[3] and the Sacred College. Everywhere through England, in France, in the Low Countries, and in Germany, all stood aghast at men so illustrious as More, and so blameless as Fisher, being treated like common traitors for a conscientious scruple, which

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[1] Fuller, ii. 70. [2] Foxe, v. 99.

[3] Paul III. made his *son's* sons cardinals, in boyhood,

had not bodied itself in any overt acts or words. Even Henry, imperious as he was, felt the storm of indignation he had raised, and sought to abate it by causing "the treasons" committed by both to be declared to the people at quarter sessions, and by sending special explanations to his ambassadors abroad, to lay before the various courts,[1] and even before the Pope.

But nothing could lessen the execration with which such executions were regarded. Paul III., indeed, in his indignation, replied by drawing up a bull excommunicating and deposing Henry. But he did not dare to publish it till three years later; Francis of France, to whom it had been sent in draft, having stigmatized it as a "most impudent document," and having warned the Pope that his claim to be above princes could not be allowed, and would only make himself a laughing stock to the world.[2]

This excommunication and absolving of his subjects from allegiance, though kept secret for the time, was yet known to Henry, and forced him, once more, to listen unwillingly to Cromwell's policy of leaguing with the Protestant princes of Germany. But they shrank from one who was almost more a papist than the Pope, and burned Protestants and Romanists with grand impartiality. Nor was Henry less averse to any connection with them, identified as they were with that liberty of thought which he regarded as an invasion of kingly authority. Religious liberty he regarded as the first step to rebellion; a belief which determined his bearing, and that of his daughter Elizabeth after him, to all who did not passively accept the creed and rites they might prescribe.

It was for the people to obey, not to discuss; for the prince to grant, for the subject gratefully to accept. Change in the direction of religious liberty was abhorrent where the only changes in political matters were towards despotism. If England were to be reformed in the Protestant sense, it could only be piecemeal,

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[1] Among others, they were sent to Gardiner, at this time ambassador in Paris.

[2] State Papers, vol. vii. 628.

as the exigencies of the moment forced some slight step in advance in a special direction from the crown. Necessity now compelled Henry to submit to proposals of union with the German princes, and of a frank toleration of the Reformed doctrines in England, but when the scheme fell through, he was only too glad that it did so. It is to this impress of Henry's mind, and of that of Elizabeth, on it, that the Church of England owes its peculiar constitution, "if that," to use Dr. Arnold's words, "can be said to have a constitution which never was constituted, but was left as avowedly imperfect as Cologne Cathedral, where they left a crane standing on one of the half-built towers three hundred years ago, and have renewed it, from time to time, as it wore out; as a sign, not only that the building was incomplete, but that the friends of the Church hoped to finish the great work when they could."[1]

Had Cromwell been king instead of Henry, how different might have been the result; with his sympathy with true freedom of thought, his frank dislike of sacerdotalism, and his grand aspirations after a union with all the Protestant powers. The learning the New Testament by heart, had taught him to set at its right value the idea of a sacrificing priesthood, and the assumption of an external apostolicity. His intellect and heart alike refused to narrow the Church to a sect, or its ministry to a caste; with him, in the noble language of our Communion Service, the Church was the mystical body of Christ, which is the blessed company of all faithful people, clergy and laity alike; and, feeling thus, he would have made Protestantism essentially one over Europe. There might then have been no Thirty Years War, no St. Bartholomew's Night, and there certainly would have been no revolutionary protest against despotism in Church and State, such as cost Charles and Laud their heads, the country a civil war, and us the misfortune of seeing multitudes of the best of her sons defending nonconformity.

[1] See also remarks of Dr. S. Leathes, in his book, The Christian Creed, 323.

But if the grand scheme for an "Evangelical Treaty" with the Protestant nations of Europe failed, through Henry's despotic hatred of union with free communities, Cromwell was soon busied by his master with a work in which both went heartily together.

The monkish brotherhoods of England had at their rise been the glory of their age; and so, at a later time, had been the orders of friars or brethren. They had embodied and displayed before men, in a rude and brutal age, the grand idea of self-sacrifice and industrious poverty. They had reclaimed the wilderness, taught men the arts of peace, and subdued them to religion. The simple monastery had been a symbol of a higher and holier life, amid the rudeness and sin that swept like a flood around. The leper, the fever-stricken, and the wretched had found, for the first time, in the brethren, the solace of human sympathy and care. When wealth poured in, as the inevitable tribute to moral grandeur, the brotherhoods for a time exhibited the splendid spectacle of men using it for others rather than themselves. The great cathedrals and abbeys rose, which seemed to illustrate by their very grandeur the loftiness of the faith and hopes of which they were the shrines. If the peasant were a serf in the baron's castle, he was a freeman in the far grander palaces of the Church. He might be beneath all in the outside world, but he was the equal of his lord when they met in the stately temple. Round these wondrous structures there seemed to rest a holiness which made even their precincts sacred, and thither the wretched and endangered might flee, as to a sanctuary which no violence could invade. The public service of God gave place at intervals only to works of mercy. It was a vision of love and heaven.

But all things human soon grow corrupt; and, even before Wycliffe's day, both monks and friars had become a byword for their unworthiness. Even under Edward III., New College in Oxford had been endowed by William of Wykeham with the revenues of priories, used for this purpose with the consent of both king and Pope. But the first terrible blow was given to

the Orders at large by Sir John Oldcastle's Bill, in 1409, petitioning the king to secularize their property for the good of the State.[1] Though too dependent on the Church to act on such a proposal, Henry left it to his son to carry out in part. More than a hundred alien priories[2]—that is, branches of foreign monasteries endowed with lands in England, but still more or less subordinate to their parent house abroad—were suppressed by Parliament in 1414, and their possessions given to the king (Henry V.) and his heirs, for ever.[3] That foreigners, mostly Frenchmen, should draw so much revenue from England while it was at war with France was felt unsafe, since they must naturally be disloyal. In 1421, moreover, Henry V. had held a meeting in the Chapter House, Westminster, of sixty abbots and priors and three hundred monks, to discuss the reform of the monks of the Benedictine order. The rise of the different colleges at Oxford and Cambridge during the fifteenth century was invariably the indication of a further suppression of monkish houses. All Souls', in 1437; Magdalen, in 1459, were founded in Oxford thus; and so were Jesus College, in 1497; Christ College, in 1505; St. John's, in 1508; and Brazenose, in 1515, at Cambridge. It had become, indeed, a recognized practice to divert the revenues of religious houses to educational uses; Wolsey himself, in 1525, by special license from the Pope, showing the striking example of suppressing forty lesser monasteries, for the purpose of founding his new college at Oxford, and his smaller one at Ipswich.

Abbeys and monasteries had, in fact, outlived their usefulness. That they still did some good cannot be doubted; for they were almost the only schools till Colet founded that of St. Paul's, and set the example of discarding their faulty system. As in Italy now, nunneries offered quiet homes for the unmar-

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[1] See page 54.

[2] The terms prior and priory differed in nothing essential from abbot and abbey.

[3] Stow's Chronicle, 345.

ried daughters of the upper classes; and monasteries, in the same way, gave an easy living to multitudes of idle or unsuccessful men. As to morality, there was, unfortunately, only too little restraint; as to the enjoyment of life, it may be judged by the case of Tewkesbury, where 144 servants in livery waited on the abbot and thirty-two monks.

That the popular belief in the essentially corrupt and unworthy life led in these once sacred foundations was well founded, is placed beyond doubt by the many attempts of the Church authorities to reform them, before Henry hewed them down. In 1489, Cardinal Morton, then Archbishop of Canterbury, obtained a license from the Pope to visit them everywhere, and to admonish, correct, or punish, as he saw fit; and Morton's letters to various houses show only too sadly how much need there was for rigorous measures. The worst charges of Henry's visitors are anticipated by the archbishop. Monkish life had become a scandal too great to be much longer endured.

It was intolerable that large bodies of men should live in idleness, waited on by troops of servants, when the revenues thus wasted had been given for the support of learning, the exercise of hospitality, and the relief of the old, the infirm, and the poor: that institutions which were bound by their statutes to have a certain number of members should deliberately allow that number to sink to half or even a third, that there might be more money to divide among the rest: above all, that there should be, over England, a vast network of establishments, nominally for the glory of God, and the edification of the people by a righteous example, but in practice worldly, grasping, sensual, and hypocritical. Erasmus had, in fact, sounded the knell of the monks and friars of all orders by the issue of his "Praise of Folly," in 1511, with its biting satire, and ridicule of their pretensions and corruptions. England and all Europe had joined in the contempt he had raised at them, and nothing is so deadly to religious pretence as its being pricked to a collapse by ironical

wit. Here is one picture of them by the great scholar, from many equally caustic. "Though held in such execration by everybody that it is thought unlucky even to meet them by chance, they are, nevertheless, immensely in love with themselves. In the first place, they think it the height of piety to have so little taste for learning as to be unable even to read. In the next place, when they roar out in church, with voices harsh as the braying of a donkey, their daily count of psalms—the notes of which they follow, to be sure, but not the meaning—they fancy they are charming the ears of the saints with the divinest music. There are some of them, too, who make a good profit out of dirt and mendicity, begging their bread from door to door with a great deal of noise. Nay, they press into all the public-houses, get into the stage-coaches, come on board the passage-boats, to the great loss and damage of the regular highway beggars. And this is the way these most sweet men, by their dirt, their ignorance, their brutal vulgarity, and their impudence, imitate the apostles—so they have the assurance to tell us."

The popular feeling of the day respecting monks and friars, thus embodied for the educated in the satire of Erasmus, is more broadly but as effectively reflected in "The Supplication of the Beggars," a pamphlet published originally in 1527, and immensely popular in the following years. It purported to be a petition to the king from the legitimate beggars of the realm, "the wretched hideous monsters, on whom scarcely for horror any eye dare look: the foul, unhappy sort of lepers, and other sore people, needy, impotent, blind, lame, sick, that live only by alms." It complained that they were left to die of hunger because "another sort, not of impotent, but of strong, puissant, and counterfeit, holy and idle beggars and vagabonds," had "craftily crept into the realm," and had "increased into a kingdom." These beggars were the "bishops, abbots, priors, deacons, archdeacons, suffragans, priests, monks, canons, friars, pardoners,[1] and sum-

[1] Sellers of indulgences.

ners."[1] They "had begged so importunately that they had got into their hands more than the third part of all the realm." "The goodliest lordships, manors, lands, and territories, are theirs. Besides this, they have the tenth part of all the corn, meadow, pasture, grass, wood, colts, calves, lambs, pigs, geese, and chickens. Over and besides, the tenth part of every servant's wages, the tenth part of wool, milk, honey, wax, cheese, and butter, and they look so narrowly to their profits, that the poor wives must be countable to them for every tenth egg, or else she does not get her rights at Easter, and is taken for a heretic. Besides this, they have their four offering-days. What money do they not pull in by probates of wills, privy-tithes, offerings at pilgrimages, and at their first masses? Every man-child that is buried must pay something for masses and dirges to be sung for him, or else they will accuse the friends and executors of heresy. What money do they not get by mortuaries, by hearing confessions (and yet they do not keep them secret), by consecrating churches, altars, super-altars, chapels, and bells; by cursing men and absolving them again for money? What a multitude of money the pardoners gather in a year! How much money the sumners get by extortion in a year, by citing the people to the Commissary's Court, and afterwards releasing them for money! Finally, what do the infinite number of begging friars get in a year?"

The difficulty of raising the taxes granted the king for the use of the country is, then, ascribed to the general poverty caused by the exactions of the bishops and Orders. "Lay these sums to the aforesaid third part of the possessions of the realm, and you may see whether it draws nigh to the half of the whole substance of it, or not; indeed, you shall find it is far more than the half."

The use made of all this wealth by "this greedy sort of sturdy, holy, idle thieves" is said only to be to "exempt themselves from

[1] Officers who summoned persons to the ecclesiastical courts.

obedience to the king," and "to transfer all rule, power, lordship, authority, obedience, and dignity, from him to themselves." "The realm wrongfully stands tributary, not to any temporal prince, but to a cruel, devilish blood-supper" (the Pope) "drunk with the blood of the saints and martyrs of Christ."

Their immorality is next assailed. Their licentiousness is declared to have "debauched and turned into poor profligates 100,000 women in England." Yet, "who is he, though he be never so much aggrieved, who dare lay to their charge, by any action at law, even the leading astray of a wife or daughter, a trespass, debt, injury to person, or any other offence? If he do, he is, by-and-by, accused of heresy."

No excommunicated man, it is added, can sue any action in the king's courts. All knew the result in Hunne's case, and every year showed others not much different. Had the priests and monks not laughed to scorn the Statute of Mortmain, leaving the king only one half of his realm?

The pretence of delivering souls from purgatory is then stated to be the only "colour for these yearly exactions." But "many men of great literature and judgment, for the love they bear to the truth, have not feared to put themselves in peril of death, by maintaining that there is no purgatory, but that it is an invention of the priests, for their own ends. If, moreover, they or the Pope can really deliver souls from it, and will pray for no man who does not pay them, they are tyrants, and have no charity."

The "Supplication" ends with the rough advice, noteworthy as a sign of the times—"Tie these holy idle thieves to the carts, to be whipped naked about every market town till they fall to labour."

That such an attack on the established Church, in all its orders, should have been immensely popular, is the best proof of its having lost public respect. Nor was the "Supplication" read only by the masses of the people; it found its way, through Anne Boleyn, to the king, who thought so well of it that he forced Sir Thomas More to withdraw proceedings against its

author, and even had him brought to court to a private audience. More himself wrote a Reply, but it had no effect in abating the popularity of the attack.

To Henry, however, the wealth of the abbeys and monasteries was, doubtless, even more tempting than any hope of purifying the moral atmosphere by their suppression. Their independence of the national Church authorities, by special Papal immunities, was, moreover, itself enough to make him their enemy. No bishop could touch them. Morton and Wolsey had tried it, but had utterly failed. It was a saying that the monks were the Pope's garrison in England. They held their privileges direct from him, and naturally felt that they were his servants first, and Englishmen next. Everything united to band them against the Reformation. They belonged to the past, and saw their destruction in the new order of things. Bitter proof had already been given that every monastery was a fortress held for the enemy who, even now, was only waiting a fitting moment to release all Henry's subjects from their allegiance. Political necessity joined conveniently with the prospect of unlimited plunder to hasten the suppression of the whole monkish system.

It is hard for us, at this day, to realize the state of things then. Twenty-seven of the mitred abbots and priors ranked as barons of England, and sat, or might sit, in the House of Lords, with the bishops; and the wealth of some of them was enormous. Sixteen had a revenue of which the highest was equal, in our money, to £48,000 a year, and the lowest to £12,000. Six abbots who were not barons had equal to over £12,000 a year; and the remaining eleven of those who were peers of the realm had from £5,000 to £12,000.[1] How much lordly splendour of palaces, grounds, retinues, and living must such princely incomes have implied. The description of

[1] See in Fuller's Church History, ii. 210. I have assumed that money was then worth twelve times as much as now, which is rather under than over the truth.

such an abbey as Glastonbury is a picture of almost ideal luxury and worldly glory.

As a first step towards the suppression of the "religious houses," Henry appointed Cromwell, in the summer of 1535, visitor-general of all monasteries, by virtue of the power granted by the Act of Supremacy, to which a clause authorizing such a visitation had been appended. No one could have been better fitted for the office, either by previous training, or by his zeal for that freedom of conscience of which the monks were the natural enemies. While in Wolsey's service he had been employed to break up the lesser monasteries, whose revenues were to be transferred to the cardinal's new college and school, and he now had Henry thoroughly with him.

The first step was to appoint visitors to report on the state of all monastic establishments, of whatever name. By October they were at work, and so zealously did they execute their task, that they were ready to report to Parliament at its meeting in February. The details are in too many cases unfit for quotation, but the condition of the mass may be judged by the words of so fierce a Papist as Stokesley, Bishop of London—that "the lesser houses were as thorns, soon plucked up, but the great abbots were like putrefied old oaks"[1]—or by the fact that when the reports of the visitors were presented to Parliament they roused such a feeling that the cry broke out on all sides, "Down with them! down with them!"

[1] Burnet, i. 396.

CHAPTER XV.

QUEEN ANNE BOLEYN.

THE new year (1536) was ushered in by the death of Queen Catherine, on the 7th January, at Kimbolton, where she had lived for three months, slowly dying. She had had the residence and household of a princess, but what can minister to a mind diseased? She had survived her divorce two years and seven months, resolute to the last in her denunciation of it, and in her efforts to interest the Pope and her nephew on her behalf. Her fear had been only too well founded that a marriage for which murder had opened the way could not have the blessing of God. The ghost of Warwick was her Nemesis.

Queen Anne was at last freed from her rival, and showed her joy with equal simplicity, bad taste, and fatal result. It is only the first step that is hard, and, had she realized it, Henry, having thrust aside the wife of his youth, after living with her, or at least being her husband, for twenty-four years, was at best an uncertain prize for her successor. Anne had been married now for three years, but for more than two of them had had increasing cause to feel that Henry had soon tired of her and wished her out of his way. Even so far back as before the birth of Elizabeth, on the 7th of September, 1533, she had found that he was consulting astrologers and sorcerers whether he should have a son. His rage had been so wild when a daughter was born that no one seemed safe against his violence, and she

herself had been frightened by his fury. He was now forty-two, and a sore, which never afterwards healed, was opening in his leg, affecting his health so much that his physicians feared he might die within a year. For nine years he had hoped for a son, but the Pope had kept off his new marriage for eight, and now he had only another unfortunate girl. How would it be with the succession should he leave no male heir? His father had gained the throne by an accident; and though most of the rightful heirs had been murdered, there were still some who might push a daughter aside.

Enemies of all kinds were round Anne on every side, and she was as frank and natural as Catherine had been stately and reserved, so that there was no want of opportunities for perversion and slander. Fanatical priests hovered near, to whom any course, however infamous, that might remove her, was a glorious service to Holy Church; for was she not a heretic and the great patroness of heresy? Her position, moreover, stood in the way of the advancement of rival aspirants to the succession. Could she and her daughter be put out of the way, two families might hope for aggrandisement. The daughters of Mary, Henry's sister, and the Duke of Suffolk, would in that case be near the throne. The Earl of Dorset had married one of them and thus joined Suffolk as Anne's enemy. The daughter of the Duke of Norfolk, Anne's uncle, was married to the Duke of Richmond, son of Henry and Elizabeth Blount, and there was good reason to believe that, if Anne and Elizabeth were gone, Richmond, now seventeen years of age, might be king, and Norfolk's daughter queen. The old families, moreover, were jealous of the advancement to the throne of the descendant in the third generation of a London merchant.[1] There was, besides, the old deadly feud between her and the partisans of Catherine, and with this, as I have said, the still more extended hatred of her as the friend of the Reformation.

[1] Godfrey Boleyn: Anne's father was his grandson.

Added to all, Henry had, in fact, already chosen her successor. Even before the birth of Elizabeth the French ambassador noticed that "he had a new fancy, and that his regard for Anne was less than it had been, and diminished daily."[1] The Spanish envoy had noticed the same. A year later the "displeasure he had conceived against her" was mentioned in the instructions of the emperor himself.[2] Her zeal for the Reformation was itself an offence, for she was as broad and charitable as Henry was Romish and bigoted. She had besought him to seek support in Germany, and to form an Evangelical League of all Protestants. Italian cardinals had been ousted, partly through her, from two English bishoprics, and Latimer and Shaxton put in their place. Above all, Cranmer was getting his English Bible ready for publication, thanks to her favour. Gardiner, now at Paris, felt that not a moment must be lost. If Anne were not destroyed, England would be hopelessly cut off from Rome. The wily bishop, therefore, hinted that some plot might be contrived to accuse her to the king. Her open, unsuspicious nature made it easy to fix any charge against her now that Henry was tired of her. But the time had not yet come, for Anne was again expecting to have a son.

Absolute power and unbridled passion had wrought their worst on Henry. The failure of the German negotiations infuriated him as a personal affront, and Anne was in disgrace. Catherine had died on the 7th January, 1536, and for the moment Henry had raved about "his brave old Kate," but this did not keep him from running after Jane Seymour. While the old queen lay yet unburied, Anne, going suddenly into a room, found Jane and the king together, alone; she on his knee, receiving and returning his caresses. Anne, stricken to the heart, naturally showed her sorrow, but Henry, fearing for his son yet unborn, leaped up and tried to calm her, with the assurance "Peace, sweetheart, all shall yet go well for thee."

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[1] Quoted by Froude, ii. 64.

[2] November, 1534.

But the only peace for her, henceforth, was the grave. On January 29th, the day fixed for Catherine's funeral, she was confined of a dead son.

Her doom was fixed. No sooner had the news been announced than Henry burst into her chamber in a fury, and told the pale, exhausted woman, "It is now too sure that God will give me no male heir by you." In her weakness she could not speak, and turning away he left her with the shameless words, "When you get up I'll speak to you again." She had been ill for weeks before, and her recovery was slow. Meanwhile Henry came again to see her, and Anne tried, in her sad way, to soothe him by saying that she would have a son by-and-by. "I will have no more boys with you for mother," replied the monster. "It is your unkindness that has killed our son," groaned the outraged woman.[1]

The conspirators needed only to seize some favourable moment, and Anne was lost.

Parliament met on the 4th of February, 1536, and at once set to work at the suppression of all monasteries with an income not exceeding £200 a year, equal to £2,400 of our money. No fewer than three hundred and seventy-six fell under this first stroke,[2] yielding an aggregate yearly value, at a low rate, of not less than £32,000, or £384,000 at the present value of money. Their cattle, furniture, plate, &c., were worth fully £1,200,000,[3] besides. Latimer and Cranmer pleaded hard that three or four should be retained in every county, as peaceful retirements and centres of Christian hospitality and benevolence. The funds derived from the rest, they wished to be devoted, at least in part, to the establishment of "seminaries of sound learned and religious education," or as it is worded by Strype, "that from these ruins there would be new foundations erected in every cathedral, to be nurseries of learning, for the whole diocese,"[4]

[1] See the story in full in Dixon's Two Queens, iv. 259, ff.

[2] Burnet's Reform. i. 447. [3] At the present value of money.

[4] Strype's Memoir of Cranmer, i. 73.

and that more bishoprics might be founded so as to bring dioceses to a more manageable size. Unfortunately their counsel fell on deaf ears, for Henry wanted the money for himself, to bribe a party to support him. A little later, all was gone, part for public expenses, more on Henry's personal extravagance, and the rest in grants and cheap sales to laymen.

Meanwhile the toils were being drawn over the unhappy queen. Various schemes had been thought of for getting her out of the way, but all had failed. At last, Gardiner, who hated her mortally for her friendship for Cranmer and Latimer, and her favour to reform, pretended that he had seen some letters in Paris accusing her of adultery. Yet for months back she had been lying, an invalid, on her couch, and even the bitter foes around her had never whispered a word against her purity. Not even Charles's envoy breathes a suspicion of such a charge, or of any other, though he would only too gladly have done so. On the 14th April, the Parliament which had accomplished the national separation from Rome, was dissolved, and the writs for a new one were issued for the 6th of June. In the short interval of seven weeks Anne must be disposed of. Ten days after the dissolution, Audley, "the sordid slave," and Rich, "the base and profligate,"[1] were set to manufacture evidence, and within a week Anne heard that her enemies were trying to get up a scandalous charge against her. On the 2nd of May she was summoned, at Greenwich, before a secret commission appointed to manage the matter. They were not ready with any charge, and so none was made, but they hoped to get something that might be perverted to the support of their plot from Anne herself. Norfolk bore himself to her with coarse hostility, interrupting her constantly with "Tut, tut," and shaking his head at her words. Leaving the room, she went to the nursery, and taking her child in her arms, stepped towards Henry, who was at the window, looking out at the crowd below. But nothing could

[1] These are Lord Campbell's epithets.

touch a bosom like his. Calling her servants soon after, she set off in her barge for Westminster, but another boat followed, bearing Audley, Norfolk, and some other conspirators, who arrested her, midway to London Bridge, on the charge of infidelity to the king. It was useless for her to protest her innocence; the barge was turned towards the Tower, and she was handed over as a prisoner. Scarcely recovered from the birth of her still-born child, she was now to find that not only her husband, and her uncle, but even her father, unmanned by fear of the tyrant, had been long in the secret of her destined fate, while outwardly full of respect to her; and that her brother, Lord Rochford, and four others, were overwhelmed in the same ruin as herself. It was one of the worst traits of Henry, indeed, that he had learned to hide even his purpose to murder under a mask of familiarity and kindness. "Three may keep counsel," said he to Cavendish, "if two be away; and if I thought that my cap knew my counsel, I would cast it into the fire, and burn it."

Cranmer was forthwith forbidden the court, for he might have disconcerted the plans of the conspirators. Anne, meanwhile, on reaching the Tower, had at once written the king a letter, so exquisite in its simplicity and transparent innocence that it might have moved any heart but his. She told him that never prince had wife more loyal than she had been to him. "Try me, good king," said she, "but let me have a lawful trial, and let not my sworn enemies sit as my accusers and judges; yet, let me receive an open trial, for my truth shall fear no open shame." The charge she pronounced "an infamous slander;" the poor gentlemen in strait imprisonment for her sake were "innocent," as well as herself.[1]

The next day Cranmer also wrote the king venturing as far in the queen's behalf as was possible with such a man. "He never had better opinion in woman than he had in her, which

[1] Brewer's Letters and Papers (Henry VIII.) Introd. p. 521.

makes me think that she should not be culpable." But all was in vain. The axe was already sharpened.

On the 10th and 11th of May, true bills were returned against the queen, her brother, three other gentlemen, and a person of "low degree," a youth, Mark Smeaton, whose musical gifts had brought him about the court.

These bills set forth that the queen had incited them during three years back, that is, almost ever since her marriage, to commit the most odious crime; that they had at various times compassed and imagined the king's death, and that the king, having heard of these crimes, had been so grieved that certain harms and dangers had happened to his royal body. This referred to the ulcers on his legs, now of long standing—caused by his gross habit of body, and ending in his death eleven years later. These, the slavish jury found, were caused by grief, though his sorrow was so light as to permit his marrying Jane Seymour the day after Anne was murdered. They knew it was at the peril of their lives if they refused to gratify the king by finding the bills as he desired, for had he not threatened to have Montague's head, years before, if even the House of Commons crossed him?

Who can believe that Anne could have dared to lead a life so dissolute in a court where many enemies watched her every word and slightest act? One was accused of an offence committed at Westminster, commencing on the 6th, and completed on the 12th of October, 1533—that is, a month after the birth of Elizabeth. But shameful as this accusation was, its infamy pales before that of the last in the indictment, by which Anne's own brother was charged with an offence commencing on the 2nd, and completed on the 5th day of November, 1535—that is, a few weeks before the queen was delivered of her dead son!

The four commoners were tried next day, the 12th, and all knew that to turn king's evidence was the only hope of life. But all, except Smeaton, indignantly denied the charges. How

unlikely that while the three gentlemen repudiated with horror any imputation on the queen, a youth of humble social rank should be the single person who had the queen in his power. Nor do we know how far his confession extended, what were its conditions, or how it was obtained. To extract some admission from a poor youth of humble birth was easy, whether from playing with his hope of life, or by torture. Milman, indeed, in his splendid drama of "Anne Boleyn," may be right in picturing him as led by Anne's priestly enemies to accuse himself falsely,—for the lowly innocent worship he bore her goodness,—on the assurance that if faithlessness were sworn against her, she might be divorced, but could not be put to death.

The conspirators, eager to destroy their victim, repeatedly tempted the prisoners with offers of life if they would say anything against her, and each was told, falsely, that the others had confessed. The confessional, also, was doubtless used, for every priest was the natural enemy of Anne, but nothing would make either of the three knights accused breathe a word against an innocent woman, though they knew the horrible death before them if they stood firm.

On the 15th, Anne and her brother were tried within the Tower, so that the public might be excluded—Audley, the unscrupulous tool of Henry, presiding. The Duke of Norfolk, the deadly enemy of the Boleyns, assisted by twenty-six "lords triers," formed the court. The list was chosen by Norfolk, and did not include one friend of the New Learning, nor a single person who had ever been friendly to the queen. The pretenders to the crown, and their connections, with some kinsmen of the king, made it up. Nor did they dare to hold the trial in Westminster. Anne's father had been forced to sit in the secret commission which trumped up accusations against her,[1] and was now compelled, on pain of death, to sit as one of her judges, to give

[1] Sir Thomas Boleyn receives an excellent character from Erasmus. See Strype's Cranmer, i. 7. See also page 152.

the trial an appearance of fairness. It marks, above all, the vileness of the times, that her brother found his wife, that "detestable woman," as Sir James Mackintosh calls her, the chief perjurer against him.

The queen, having been called to the bar, appeared without an adviser, and attended only by ignorant and treacherous women of her household. But "it was everywhere muttered abroad that she, in her defence, had cleared herself in a most noble speech."[1] There were no witnesses confronted with either her or her brother. Smeaton, who alone had ventured to charge her with guilt, had been shrewdly put out of the way two days before. To be accused was thus, necessarily, to be condemned. All the writers who lived near her time speak of the completeness of her defence. "She made such wise and discreet answers that she seemed fully to clear herself."[2] But "the awful spirit of fanaticism arrayed against our early Reformers"[3] thirsted for her blood as one of them. Hope to get nearer the throne by her fall, as well as hatred of her race, filled at least Norfolk's breast; and, moreover, Henry's pleasure was known, and her judges' lives would answer for hers if she were spared. She listened with unchanged face to the sentence of death pronounced by her uncle, and then, clasping her hands, turned her eyes towards heaven and uttered a short prayer—"Oh, Father of mankind! the way, the life, and the truth, Thou knowest whether I have deserved this death." Then, turning to her judges, she told them—"I have ever been faithful to the king, though I do not say that I have not been wanting in due humility, and have allowed my fancy to nurse some foolish jealousy of him. Other misdeeds against him I have never committed."

The whole trial had been so utter a mockery, that Henry had sent word to Jane Seymour, in the morning, that all

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[1] Wyatt, in Singer's Cavendish, 448. [2] Holinshed, iii. 796.
[3] Milman, Introd. to Anne Boleyn: A Dramatic Poem.

would soon be over, and that by three in the afternoon he should be able to send her word of the queen's condemnation. As reported by contemporaries, the whole scene was without a parallel in the history of judicial murders.

Anne having been sentenced, her brother was brought before the same packed bench of enemies, and, as in his sister's case, he had no counsel, and no witnesses were brought forward against him. But he spoke so well, and his innocence was so apparent, that it seemed likely he would be acquitted. His death had been ordered, however, and the slaves who acted for Henry obeyed.

After his condemnation, Norfolk followed him to his cell, hoping to get a confession from him, at last, to save the king's honour. But he resolutely maintained his perfect innocence, and that of his sister. From him the duke went to Anne's room, but was met by a declaration that "on her salvation she had committed no offence."

No favour was asked by the condemned men but a little time to prepare for death, yet that was denied them. Henry sent orders that they should die on Wednesday, only thirty-six hours after Rochford's sentence, and five days after the earlier sentences. An appeal was made by the Constable of the Tower for a little longer respite, but the king would not hear of it, unless they confessed. There was a danger that seemed appalling in that age, that Rochford would die without time for absolution. But Henry did not care for that. A king's messenger was sent to Norris, to tempt him to accuse the queen by a promise of life; but though young, and about to leave two orphans, he sent back word that "the queen was innocent, and he was ready to die for what he said." "Ha, ha!" cried Henry, furious at such constancy, "hang him up, then, hang him up." Young Weston was specially admired for his beauty and manly accomplishments, and pitied for the sake of his family. The French ambassador begged mercy for him in his master's name. The young man's wife and mother flung themselves at Henry's feet,

in the deepest mourning, praying for a reprieve. They would give up everything they had in the world if his life were spared, but he would not confess or accuse the queen, and Henry did not want money, but some words against Anne. So he drove off the broken-hearted women with the brutal answer, "Let him hang, let him hang!" Next day Rochford and the other four were hanged on Tower Hill, where Anne could see them die, with all the horrible accompaniments of death for treason in that age—their cutting down while still alive, their disembowelment, and finally their beheading and quartering, the heads and limbs being stuck up on the city gates.

Cranmer had been ordered by Henry to confess the queen, and he and Latimer had gone to her to the Tower, and were satisfied of her innocence. But Henry wished, and the conspirators needed, a divorce, as well as condemnation, and Cranmer was appointed to examine the case. The canon law, with its infinite casuistry, was still in force, and opened a thousand means of divorce to any one. Indeed every marriage offered legal grounds, by the Romish law, for dissolution, so skilfully had confusion been created by an endless multiplication of impediments. The primate was bent on saving Anne's life if possible, and might be trusted to annul the marriage on some of these endless canonical subtleties, if a chance of saving her turned on his doing so. Lord Percy had denied any pre-contract, but Anne had, doubtless, in her youth, exchanged some loving words with some one, and if she had, it was enough. Hastening to the Tower, and seeing her in private, his hopes rose. Calling his court at Lambeth, Anne and the king were both summoned by their attorneys; the casuistical objection was brought forward, and the marriage was declared null and void.

Would this save her? If never really married, the charges against her fell to the ground, for, not having been Henry's wife, she could not have committed conjugal offences against him. The whole proceedings of the trial were evidently illegal. The

sentence was void in law. It would be murder to execute her for charges which the annulling of her marriage cancelled as unfounded. But law, or justice, or honour, were nothing. Any life that stood between Henry and the caprice of the moment had come to be as little to him as to a Turkish sultan. Twelve hours after the marriage was cancelled he sent orders to put the queen to death at noon next day.

That night was spent by Anne in prayer. The Constable of the Tower next morning told Norfolk that he had seen her take the sacrament and was sure she would seal her innocence with her blood. Alesse, a Scotch religious exile, of high rank as a scholar and divine, then in London, was with Cranmer in Lambeth Gardens as the night wore through. "Do you know what is to happen to-day?" asked the primate. "No," said Alesse, "since the queen's imprisonment I have not left my room, and know nothing of what is going on." "She who has been the queen of England on earth," said Cranmer, his eyes raised to heaven and his face wet with tears, "will this day be a queen in heaven."

Next day, at noon, a small group of selected officials attended inside the Tower, to witness the last scene of the plot. Instead of the axe, Henry had ordered that an experiment in beheading be tried on Anne, by employing the Calais executioner to use a sword. If it answered well, he intended to introduce the plan into England. A few minutes after noon all was over, and the Tower guns at once gave Henry the signal of its being so. He was waiting to hear them, within sound, ready with dogs and horses for a holiday, and had sent for Jane Seymour, for he intended to marry her within a few hours. Among the gay party he was the merriest. At the report of the guns he sprang up and shouted gaily, "Ah, the business is done, uncouple the hounds, let us follow the sport." That day he wore white as mourning, and the next, he was married to his new mistress. "I have no doubt," said Charles's sister, Maria, Queen of Hungary, "that when the king is tired of his new wife, he will

find the means of getting rid of her as easily." "The new queen," wrote Charles's envoy to his master, "is low in stature and of no great beauty. If they want a divorce from her, they will find plenty of witnesses against her." Of Anne, even Father Curles, the French priest, could say, "it seems enough for her to die, a sacrifice, in her victorious innocence." The true character of the murdered woman is best read in her life. Her charity was unbounded. The wretched never appealed to her in vain. During the last nine months of her life she distributed in various forms of charity a sum equal to £168,000 of our money, and her goodness had been always the same. Even Wolsey had written to the Pope of her, in 1528, commending "her approved excellent qualities; the purity of her life; her maidenly and womanly modesty; her soberness, chasteness, meekness, and wisdom." That she chose Latimer, the fearless outspoken man, for her chaplain, was an invitation to scrutiny of her daily life. She had been "the rainbow o'er the awful throne."

"Henry alone, it may be hoped," says Sir James Mackintosh, "was capable of commanding his slaves to murder, on the scaffold, her whom he had lately cherished and adored. In the executions of More and Anne he proclaimed that he henceforward bade defiance to compassion, affection, and veneration, and approached perhaps as nearly to the ideal standard of perfect wickedness as the infirmities of human nature will allow."[1]

Anne's death was a shrewd blow of Gardiner and the other Romish conspirators at the hated Reformation. Nothing could have been more calamitous to its friends. Dean Milman only expresses their overwhelming regrets when he makes Cranmer say, in reference to it :—

> "Farewell, now,
> Vain hope, that the whole land should hear the Word
> Of God go forth on all the winds; no more
> Fatigue the dead cold Saint with fruitless prayer,

[1] History of England, ii. 205.

Or kiss with pilgrim lip the unheeding shrine:
That not a village, nor a silent hamlet
In mountain solitude, or glen, of traveller
Untrod, should want its Sabbath bell to knoll
To purest worship: that a holy priesthood,
Chaste, simple, to themselves alone severe,
Poor below luxury, rich beyond contempt,
Environed with their heaven-led families,
Should with their lives' most saintly eloquence
Preach Christ—Christ only;—while all reverend Learning
In arched cathedral cloister, or the grove
That bosoms deep the calm and thoughtful college,
Should heavenward meditate, and bring to earth
The knowledge learned amid the golden stars."[1]

Rome had added another to her long roll of portentous crimes committed in the outraged name of religion.

Parliament and Convocation both met in June, and both eagerly carried out the king's wishes respecting the dead queen. The succession was once more altered, Mary and Elizabeth being both pronounced illegitimate, and the children of the new marriage or a future one were named the heirs to the throne. A fresh Act was also passed requiring all officers, civil and ecclesiastical, to renounce, on oath, the authority of the Pope, and this, with the Supremacy Act, finally transferred to the crown nearly all the authority formerly held by Rome.

Convocation met on the day after the sitting of Parliament, Cromwell taking his seat, as the representative of the king, above all the ecclesiastics, and thus bringing home to all the completeness of the humiliation of the Church.

The opening sermons were preached, both morning and afternoon, by Latimer, whom Cranmer had wisely chosen for a duty for which his fearless nature and unrivalled command of simple and powerful language especially fitted him. He had selected as his text the parable of the unjust steward,[2] laying special stress on the declaration of the greater wisdom in their genera-

[1] Milman's Anne Boleyn, 123. [2] Luke xvi.

tion of the children of this world than "the children of light." Both sermons were preached in Latin, but were presently translated into English, evidently by himself, and throw a strong light on the religious condition of the Church and people. Spoken to the clergy themselves, any charges or statements must have been indisputable, else they would instantly have been confuted. Mass being ended, and the roll of the organ silent, Latimer rose to address the bishops, abbots, and dignified clergy, sitting robed and mitred before him, most of them wishing nothing more than that they could burn him. Had they, he asked, been faithful stewards hitherto? Had not some of them adulterated the word of God, and preached that redemption by Christ's death was only for those who died before His coming, but that now, since then, redemption and forgiveness of sin purchased by money and devised by men, is of efficacy, and not that purchased by Christ. This was a thrust at purgatory—"that fiery furnace that has burned away so many of our pence"—or "purgatory pick-purse," as he presently calls it. They had preached, he says, that dead images ought not only to be covered with gold, but to be clad in silk and laden with precious gems and jewels, and lighted with wax candles both within the church and without, even at noon-day, while Christ's faithful and lively images, bought with His precious blood, were seen a-hungered, a-thirst, a-cold, lying in darkness and wretchedness till death relieved them." They had preached that "will-works were more acceptable to God than works of mercy, and that more fruit and devotion came of looking at an image, though only as long as it took to repeat a Paternoster, than from reading and contemplation in Scripture for seven years together. That souls in purgatory needed our help most, and could have no aid but by our prayers, not to speak of "much other such like counterfeit doctrine, that had been blasted and blown out by some for the space of three hours together." He fancies he hears "God say to us, 'All good men, in all places, complain of you, accuse your avarice, your exactions, your

tyranny. You preach very seldom. You, that ought to be My preachers, what other thing do you, than apply all your study to the bringing all My preachers to envy, shame, contempt? More than this, ye pull them into perils, into prisons, and as much as in you lieth, to cruel deaths. I would that Christian people should hear My doctrine, and at their convenient leisure read it also, but your care is not that all men may hear it, but that no layman may read it.'" The morning sermon ends by commending to their prayers the king, "chief and supreme head of the Church of England, under Christ," the new queen, Jane Seymour, and all subjects, clerical and lay, "not forgetting those that have departed out of this transitory life." So that Latimer still believed, at this date, in prayers for the dead.

The afternoon sermon is longer and even more severe. The world, he said, was full of the children of the devil. "You would find them in court, in cowls, in cloisters, in rochets,[1] be they never so white." As among the laity are many children of light, so among the clergy, though they think such holy titles as "the light of the world," "the chosen people of Christ," "a kingly priesthood," "a holy nation," and so on, apply only to them—there are many children of the world. That the people are better learned and taught now than in time past was to be attributed not to them but to God's providence and the king. "Which stirred the other first, you the king or he you by his letters, that you should preach oftener? Is it unknown, think you, how both you and your curates were in a manner forced to let books be made, not by you, but by profane and lay persons; to let them, I say, be sold abroad, and read for the instruction of the people?"

He then asks them what they had done—you, "so many great fathers," up to this time? They had burned a dead man[2] because his will did not leave them money, though in other

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1 The rochet was like a surplice, but shorter, and open at the sides.

2 The body of William Tracy, in 1532.

points he was "a very good man." They had also tried to burn him, Latimer, himself, because he would not subscribe certain articles that took away the supremacy of the king, and they had tried to fasten a charge of heresy against Erasmus.[1] "Take away these, and there is nothing else, so far as I know, that ye went about."

He then launches into a terrible denunciation of the practices by which Rome had shown itself wiser than the children of light —the hundred ways it had invented for draining England of its money. But the wisest of all were those "who brought forth our old ancient purgatory pick-purse, which was assuaged and cooled with a Franciscan's cowl, to put on a dead man's back, to the fourth part of his sins."[2]

Passing on, he tells his hearers that all men are breathlessly anxious to know what they will do now they are met, and will name them according to their acts. "Wherefore lift up your heads, brethren, and look about with your eyes, and spy what things are to be reformed in the Church of England." The Court of Arches,[3] the chief Consistory Court of the Province of Canterbury, is then charged with "cumbering and ruffling the people's business and matters," with defending vice, and with giving sentences by bribery. The Consistory Courts of each diocese, that is, the bishops' courts, are then assailed for taking money to let offenders off. The ceremonies in vogue are keenly censured; the old and new holy days that are so numerous that it seems as if it were thought that not to work was the one way to serve God—the images in special favour, and the reputed relics of saints. "Do you think that preferring picture to picture, image to image, is the right use, and not rather the abuse of images? Would it not be better for us to cut away a piece of

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[1] In 1520.

[2] Pope Clement IV. remitted the fourth part of all their sins to those who were buried in a friar's cloak. Latimer's Sermons, note p. 50.

[3] Called so from being at one time held in the arches (arcubus) or *bows* of the Church S. Mariæ de Arcubus—Bow Church, Cheapside.

our profit than to work at such ungodliness for a little gain? As to the relics, they are sometimes pigs' bones, and not those of saints." The abuses of pilgrimages had been condemned of old by the Church of England, and should be condemned again. "I think ye have heard of St. Blesis' heart at Malvern,[1] and of St. Algar's bones, how long they deluded the people, I am afraid to the loss of many souls. From these men may well conjecture that all about in this realm there are plenty of such juggling deceits. And yet you have hitherto sought no remedy, but even still the miserable people are suffered to take false miracles for true, and to lie asleep in all kind of superstition. God have mercy on us!"

"Last of all, how think you of matrimony? Is it well here? What of baptism? Shall we ever more in ministering it speak in Latin and not rather in English, that the people may know what is said and done? What do you think of the mass-priests and of the masses themselves? Your forefathers saw somewhat, who made the constitution against the venality and sale of masses, that under pain of suspension no priest should sell his saying trentals[2] or annuals."[3]

The close is grand in its earnestness. If they think there is nothing to reform, let them make merry while they live, for "God will come, God will come, He will not tarry long away. He will come and reward us as He doth the hypocrites. He will set us where wailing shall be, my brethren; where gnashing of teeth shall be, my brethren. If ye will not die eternally, live not worldly. Come, go to; leave the love of your profit, study for the glory and profit of Christ. Feed ye tenderly, with all diligence, the flock of Christ. Preach truly the word of God. Love the light, walk in the light, and so be the children of light while ye are in this world, that ye may shine in the world to

[1] St. Blaise.

[2] Three repetitions of ten different masses, said at ten different feasts.

[3] Yearly masses said for the dead on the anniversary of his death. Also, a mass said every day for a year, for the soul of a dead person.

come as bright as the sun, with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; to whom be all honour, praise, and glory. Amen!"

To us these discourses show rather the timid conservatism of the early Reformers than any revolutionary boldness. Latimer denounces purgatory, and the abuse of images, relics, ceremonies, and masses, and urges practical godliness, based on the study of Scripture, instead of a religion offering forgiveness of sins for money; but he leaves the whole fabric of Romish doctrine, in its essentials, untouched. The Real Presence was as yet part of his creed, and, as the keystone of the Romish theory, involved much more. Men outgrow the influences of education but slowly, and the Reformers, like true Englishmen, did so only by almost imperceptible degrees. Yet, even already, their revolt from Rome inevitably embodied the whole principle of Protestantism, for, in repudiating the supremacy of the Pope, they had rejected Church authority in its highest expression, and had acted on the freedom of private judgment, which carries all Protestantism in its bosom.

But however conservative to us, such words were revolutionary enough to the Convocation of 1536, and portended an ominous storm. The first business done was the production by Cromwell of the record of Queen Anne's divorce, which all signed, without opposition—"the Romanists," as Fuller says, "willingly; the Protestants faintly; but all publicly. Indeed, in this Convocation, nothing was proposed in the king's name but it passed immediately. Oh, the operation of the purge of a premunire, so lately taken by the clergy, and £100,000 paid upon it!"[1]

From politics they turned to ecclesiastical matters, but these were as stormy as what had preceded was peaceful. Gwent, the Romish prolocutor, or chairman, of the Lower House, presented an address to the Upper House, complaining of sixty-seven erroneous doctrines advanced among the people, which craved

[1] Fuller, ii. 79.

rigorous measures. Its introduction roused a fierce conflict, for many of the opinions condemned were favoured by Reformers present. The list included matters of widely various weight—the sober Protestantism of Evangelical Christians, the vagaries of obscure fanatics, and even the irreverent humour of individuals in the mob. It complained of the repudiation of extreme unction, the demand for communion in both kinds, the assertion that the young ought not to be confirmed till they have reached years of discretion; that the Church is the congregation of good men, that images are not to be superstitiously reverenced. Some, it was said, did not respect holy water, or anointing oil, or ridiculed the shaven crowns of priests, rejected auricular confession, absolution, and penance, the invocation of saints, the worship of the Holy Virgin, purgatory, the ceremonies in vogue, and pilgrimages to shrines. Other items represented, at most, the extreme opinions which always develop themselves in the few in a time of great religious excitement, and found no sympathy with the Evangelical Reformers. The singing or saying of mass, it was alleged, was denounced as but a "roaring, howling, whistling, mumming, and juggling;" the "priests' shaven crowns were spoken of as the mark of Babylon;" the hallowed oil as the Pope's butter.[1] Some even dared to say that priests had no divine authority, or that the Bible was the only standard of doctrine. But men representing so corrupt a Church—men who had burned their fellow-citizens alive in the name of religion—need not have been so sensitive to the ridicule and hatred they had so bitterly provoked.

The three last articles complained of "slanderous books and erroneous doctrines," which some bishops, it was said, did not sufficiently labour to suppress. This was specially levelled at Cranmer and the reforming bishops—Goodrich, of Ely; Shaxton, of Salisbury; Latimer, of Worcester; Fox, of Hereford; Hilsey, of Rochester; and Barlow, of St. David's. It was hoped

[1] Fuller, ii. 85.

that Cranmer was now declining in influence since Anne Boleyn's death, and that Latimer and Shaxton, who owed their sees to her, would soon fall with him. But they veiled their plots behind a protestation of frank submission to the king as their supreme head, and renounced the Pope's authority once more.

To the dismay of both Houses, however, Cranmer was found to be firmly established in the king's favour, and Henry proved to be so far of his way of thinking, that Cromwell was sent to them with a royal message, requiring them to reform the rites and ceremonies of the Church according to Scripture, "to the rejection alike of the glosses of the Schoolmen, the decrees of Popes, or any traditional and unwritten verities."[1] This message was, moreover, accompanied by a document drawn up by Henry himself, which showed him to be as learned a theologian as any of their own number. It prescribed to them a series of articles which he required them, without choice on their part, at once to accept and adopt, as those which he, in his capacity of Head of the Church, ordered them and England henceforth to believe.

Against the seven reforming bishops in the Upper House there were present ten bishops and forty abbots and priors, nearly all Romanists, as far as their terror of Henry permitted. The debate turned mainly on the doctrine of the Seven Sacraments—Baptism, Confirmation, the Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Holy Orders, and Matrimony—in support of which the Old Party urged all the traditional arguments from every source, while the Reformers took their stand solely on the authority of Scripture. Cranmer argued with splendid earnestness and force, and was zealously supported by Cromwell, but it was vain to attempt to convince men against their will.

Cranmer's friend Alesse or Alesius, to whom I have already alluded, was still in London. Though only thirty-six, he was already famous. Born in 1500, he had been a Canon of St.

[1] It fills thirteen pages in Fuller, and, like all Henry's writings, is wonderfully able.

Andrews, in 1528, when the martyr death of Patrick Hamilton won him to the Reformation. A year's imprisonment, on suspicion of heresy, erelong followed, but in 1531 he had escaped to Germany, where he had sought the society of Luther and Melancthon, and had accepted the Augsburg Confession—the Lutheran standard. An admirable defence of the right of the laity to the free use of the Bible in English had led to his being invited to England by Cranmer and Cromwell to help them in their struggles against the Old Party. Hoping through this to be of use in his own country, he accepted the invitation, and was in 1535 appointed Professor of Theology in Cambridge. But the Romanists were still too strong there, and having to leave, he came to London, and supported himself as a physician. He was a man of high theological attainments,[1] and honoured alike for his moderation and intelligence, and dignified worth. Cromwell, with his masculine breadth of sympathy, worthy of one who "knew the New Testament by heart," had little patience with the wrangling of the Judaizers who strove to stamp on the Church of the New Era the principles of the synagogue, —its narrow exclusiveness, its castes, its ritualism, and its claims to divine authority. Having, therefore, met him during the debate in Convocation, he took him to it, that he might answer Bishop Stokesley, though without preparation.[2]

In any assembly of Christian ministers, where priestly claims had not swollen sectarian pride, such a man would have been alike welcomed and honoured. But the successors of the apostles in Convocation could not tolerate a man who, though episcopally ordained, had accepted non-episcopal Lutheran notions; and his presence, no less than his ability in discussion, raised such a tumult that Cromwell had to ask him, after the first meeting, to write out his views, and let them be read henceforth by some one else.

[1] Archbishop Parker (1504—1575), calls him "vir in theologia perdoctus"—"a most learned theologian."

[2] Herzog's Real Ency. i. 249, ff.

Convocation would fain have let the discussion of Henry's overture die out in words. But he would not accept this barren result, and sent some articles to be considered by them; a hint, which, with the hopes of preferment before them, and the remembrance of the premunire, finally led to a compromise which marks the highest point reached by the Reformation during Henry's lifetime. By this—

1. The Scriptures, the three Creeds, and the first four General Councils, were henceforth to be the only standards of faith.
2. Baptism was declared necessary to salvation, children were required to be baptized for the pardon of original sin, and for the obtaining of the Holy Ghost.
3. Penance was declared necessary to salvation, including private confession.
4. The very body and blood of Christ were said to be received in the Eucharist, under the forms of bread and wine.
5. Justification was declared to be the remission of sins, and a perfect renovation in Christ, not only in outward good works, but in inward holiness.
6. Images in churches were allowed, but the people were to be taught to avoid the superstition of the past, and not to worship the image, but only God.
7. The Saints were to be honoured, but those things which God only can give were not to be expected from them.
8. Their intercessions might be asked, but all superstitious abuses were to cease, and the clergy were to obey the king, if he lessened the number of saints' days.
9. The use of vestments in Divine worship, holy water, holy bread, the carrying candles, palms, and ashes, the creeping to the cross, hallowing the font, and other ceremonies were to be retained.
10. Prayer for departed souls, and masses, and funeral rites were retained, but it was added that as Scripture

had neither declared in what place departed souls were, nor what torments they suffered, all the abuses of the Pope's pardons, or saying masses in special places, or before prescribed images, were to be put away.

These famous Ten Articles were signed first by Cromwell, as representing the king, and next, by the two archbishops, sixteen bishops, forty abbots and priors, and by fifty members of the Lower House. A preface having been afterwards added to them by the king, stating them to have been prepared by himself, and requiring their acceptance by all his subjects, they were published and circulated. If they proved successful in bringing about uniformity in religion, Henry would "be encouraged to take more pains in like matters" for the future.

But like all compromises, the Ten Articles pleased neither side. Yet the Reformers were thankful that the Scriptures and the ancient Creeds were made the standard of faith, to the exclusion of tradition, and that peace with God was no longer taught to be a matter of payment, but of living and active faith and love. They rejoiced that the direct worship of images and saints was condemned, and that purgatory was at least left uncertain, but the retention of confession and the real presence, the doing homage to images, and the praying to saints, if, in part, they show how imperfect the ideas of even the leading Reformers still were, show also how much had, as yet, to be yielded to their opponents.

The old party, on the other hand, saw four of the seven sacraments passed over in silence and the trade in purgatory put down, while the very fact that Church doctrines had been brought under debate was ominous for the future.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE BIBLE IN ENGLISH.

BOTH sides in the great struggle were now equally in earnest. Abroad, the Pope summoned Henry to a General Council to be held at Mantua, but his right to do so was challenged, and a reply sent, quoting Gregory Nazianzen, that "he thought all assemblies of bishops were to be eschewed, for he never saw good come of any of them, and they had increased rather than healed the distempers of the Church; the thirst for vainglory, and a contentious humour, bearing down reason."[1]

But had Henry been disposed to listen to anything from Rome an incident now happened which finally made the rupture complete. It had been hoped that the death of Anne Boleyn would open a way to reconciliation, but at this time a book by Cardinal Pole on the Unity of the Church reached England. It had been written long before, and had reached Henry in 1530 privately, but it had not hitherto been published. Pole was grandson, by his mother, of a brother of Edward IV., and was a near kinsman of the king on his father's side as well. Henry had liked him in his youth and had helped his views of rising in the Church. But in this book the people were urged to rebel against a tyrant more wicked than Saul, who killed the priests; more sacrilegious than Dathan, who withstood the

[1] Burnet, Ref. i. 440.

ordinance of God. It branded the king as "the vilest of plunderers, a thief and a robber," surrounded by bishops who were as bad, and declared that no punishments would suffice for his crimes. To make matters worse, it was written, to use Cranmer's words, "with that eloquence, that if it were set forth and known to the common people, it were not possible to convince them to the contrary." The effect on the Romish party, of such a book, now that it was published, was, for the time, disastrous, but, in the end, proved most fatal to Pole's family. Gardiner was set to write an answer, which appeared as an essay "On True Obedience," Bonner writing a fierce preface to it against the Pope. Stokesley and Tunstal also published a long letter in the king's defence.

The whole country was in a ferment. The "Confession of Faith" just adopted by Convocation, had been drawn up by the king himself, and was now distributed everywhere among the clergy. Cromwell was in high favour and had been made successively, this year, Keeper of the Privy Seal, Baron Cromwell, and the Vice-gerent and Vicar-General of the king. The bishops and Church dignitaries had had to rise on his entrance to Convocation and do obeisance to him as the king's representative, and he had sat in the highest place. Indeed, he had not himself been always present, and in his absence the humiliated prelates and clergy had had to honour even his deputy in the same way. Nor was he disposed to let his office be formal. Injunctions were now issued by him, to be read from every pulpit, directing the clergy how to act. They were to do their utmost to extirpate the Pope's authority and establish that of the king: to make known the Ten Articles lately issued by Convocation: to announce the suppression of superfluous holidays: to cease extolling images, relics, or pilgrimages, and to urge, instead, the keeping God's commandments, and doing works of charity. Children were to be taught the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer and Creed, in English, and the clergy were to see that they were brought up to a trade or living. The

sacraments were to be reverently observed, and curates to be provided in the absence of the parish priest. They were to keep away from ale-houses or taverns, and not to sit too long at games after meals, to be of pure life, to study the Scriptures, and be examples to their flocks. Every non-resident with an income of £20,[1] or above it, was to give a fortieth, yearly, to the poor, and every one with an income of £100 a year, or more, was to give an exhibition for each £100 at some grammar school, or at the universities, in aid of some student who should afterwards be his assistant. Where parsonage houses were decayed, twenty per cent. was to be given yearly to repair them, till put right.

Such directions from a lay officer were intensely distasteful to the clergy. They were Lollardism made into law. They cut up their gains by the roots, and forced them to do their duty. Cranmer had written them with Cromwell's approval. Carried out honestly, they would have changed the face of England for the better in a generation; but from many pulpits they were purposely read so that no one could understand them, and they were deliberately ignored as far as possible.

Nor were the monks left more at rest. Parliament had in spring made over all the monasteries with incomes below £200 to the king, and visitors were at once sent out to dissolve them. Inventories had been taken of their revenues and property at the first visitation. All the monks and nuns willing to return to a secular life, and all under twenty-four, had their expenses paid to London, to the Archbishop of Canterbury or Chancellor Audley, to be set free from their vows; those who preferred to remain being sent to some great monastery or nunnery near them. Pensions, moreover, were assigned to the abbots and abbesses during life. But the whole proceedings had from the first raised the bitterest feelings in the clergy, the monks, and the peasantry, and these were now intensified by the roughness

[1] Equal to £240 now.

of the visitors. Great complaints were made of their violence and briberies, perhaps not without reason. The abbots had, indeed, laid themselves open to harsh treatment, for in many cases they had been raising all the money they could on their lands, to have their hands full when the crash came, and in many instances they had made away with the jewels and valuables of their establishments. But their sins and shortcomings were now forgotten by the countrypeople, in their misfortunes. Ten thousand monks and nuns were seen turned on the world to earn their living, with forty shillings[1] and a gown for each man, and secular clothing for each nun. Their goods and plate, cattle, &c., estimated at £1,200,000 of our money, were seized for the king; and so were their lands, the rents of which had been valued at £384,000 of our money, but were really worth ten times as much.[2] Parliament, the abject slave of the king, had voted the whole absolutely to its master, and England now looked on with horror at this monstrous and gigantic robbery in the name of law. Had the monasteries been sequestrated to national uses, it would have been a public service, provided enough had been appropriated to religious and educational objects,[3] and kindness shown the monks and nuns themselves. But that all should be devoured by the king was an outrage that moved the depths of popular feeling. The very completeness of the confiscation made it more shocking, for even the churches and cloisters were in most places pulled down, and the materials sold for what they would fetch. None felt more indignant at the immorality than the Reformers.

From one cause or other most of the religious houses had been surrendered to Henry before the Act was passed for their suppression, only 123, apparently, being able to hold out till it finally became law. Oxford had been revolutionized in 1535, but in its case the change was clearly for the better. The Old Party had had all their own way since the Christian Brethren

[1] Equal to £25. [2] Burnet, Abridgement, 102. [3] As in Germany.

had been driven out, in 1526. The New Learning had since then been tabooed, and mediævalism had had a spasmodic revival. The university had sunk very low. Multitudes of idle clergy lived in it as a pleasant club, which cost them nothing. Study was a thing of the past.

On this sleepy paradise the visitors descended without warning, and in the few days of their stay changed everything. They founded new professorships, of polite Latin, philosophy, divinity, canon law, natural sciences, and, worst of all, of Greek, endowing them from the university funds. The dull, worthless textbooks hitherto in use were put aside, and others substituted for them. The reign of the Schoolmen, which Erasmus had so bitterly ridiculed, was finally over. Idle residents were required to return to their benefices on pain of being forced to attend lectures and do college exercises like other students, and strict discipline was established. From Oxford the visitors passed through the whole country, everywhere leaving behind them bitter feelings in those whom the changes they introduced affected. Though only as yet empowered to visit, they everywhere seized whatever was worth taking, on the sole authority of the king, and stripped the churches and houses of the monks and nuns of all their jewels, their silver and gold ornaments, vessels, &c., taking a note of anything left behind, and imposing such injunctions on the unhappy victims as account for the surrender of their houses, without waiting for an Act to compel them to do so.

The Act itself, to legalize this royal plunder, had been passed under circumstances which must have sunk deep into men's minds. Henry had come down to the House of Commons and delivered the Bill to the Speaker, bidding the Members "look upon it, and weigh it in conscience," and informing them that "he would be there again on the following Wednesday to hear their minds." They could not forget what this meant, for the old threat to have their heads if he had not his will from them, was, doubtless, still fresh in their memories. The nobility and

gentry missed the provision for their younger sons and daughters, which the monasteries and nunneries afforded: the people and the poor remembered the abbot's table and his doles: and the superstitious shrank from the thought of their departed friends being now left hopelessly in purgatory. The reports of the visitors did little to quiet these complaints, for the confiscation of everything by the king had, at best, only substituted one great abuse for another. Cromwell, therefore, induced Henry to sell some lands at easy rates, or even to grant them, to the nobility and gentry, with a condition that they should maintain the wonted hospitality; thus hoping to secure the support of a large party to the Suppression and the Reformation, and also to pacify the people by the continuance of the old monkish bounty. Fifteen new monasteries and sixteen nunneries were also founded, with strict rules. But the discontent was alike wide and deep, and was soon to burst into a flame, for every pulpit, and every public cross rang with denunciations, and thousands of monks and nuns, now turned on the world, everywhere appealed to the popular sympathy.

It must always, to a large extent, be so in all such crises. The dissolution of the religious houses was a necessity alike of morality, religion, and public policy, and had already been found to be so in Germany, where they had been suppressed, in some cases, as early as 1524. In our own century and the close of the last, their suppression in France, Spain, Portugal, Italy, and Mexico, vindicates the earlier wisdom of our forefathers. The sufferings of individuals, often personally innocent; the fact that the houses served—as homes where thousands led an idle and easy life; as the inns of the time; the distributors of alms, and the only substitute, however poor, for public schools,—must not make us forget their essential worthlessness. They were notoriously the most corrupt part of the Church, when corruption was the rule. Even Churchmen like Morton and Wolsey had denounced them as strongly as Cromwell's visitors—charging them with gross immorality, and with being "so many idle

mouths that did neither the Church nor the State any service, but were a reproach for their lives and a burden to the country."[1] Still more, they were the deadly enemies of the spiritual liberty which England had just asserted; while loyal to the Pope, they were nests of conspiracy against the State. Their suppression, therefore, cannot be lamented, however much the mode of it may be condemned.

But the times were wretched. "It is not life which most now live, but misery," said Ascham, eleven years later. No country in Europe had so many beggars. Yet the peasantry, in their distress, had not forgotten the past so wholly, as to sink contentedly into the degradation which has made it possible for a popular writer in our own day to speak of those of a certain shire, as very little above the oxen they drive. In many cases their fathers, like Latimer's father, had been sturdy yeomen with farms of "three or four pounds by the year, tilling so much as kept half-a-dozen men; with a walk for a hundred sheep; his wife milking thirty kine;" and it took generations for their children to fall to the level they were hereafter to reach.

All these causes, working together, at last broke into insurrection, and it became clear that a peasants' war, like that of Germany ten years before, was imminent, as More and others had predicted. In October, 20,000 men rose in Lincolnshire, led by one Melton, a shoemaker, whom Burnet calls a priest in disguise. They complained of the suppression of the monasteries; of the king employing mean and ill counsellors—that is, Cromwell and Audley; of bad bishops—that is, the Reformers; and of four of the Sacraments being taken away. Yet they acknowledged the king as the supreme head of the Church, and took an oath to be true to him, to God, and to the commonwealth. Henry treated them with the most contemptuous defiance, asking them what right they, "the rude commons of one shire, and

[1] Burnet, i 42.

that the most brute and beastly of the whole realm," had to question the prince whom they were bound "to obey and serve with their lives, lands, and goods." Meanwhile, the Duke of Suffolk, Henry's brother-in-law, was sent north with an army, and his liberal promises and temperate bearing speedily broke up the peasant force, so that in a fortnight most of it had quietly dispersed.

But this was only the first bursting of the storm. The same messenger that brought news of the rising in Lincolnshire, told of a far more formidable movement in Yorkshire. The same grievances were urged, but the leaders were men of higher social position and greater ability. On their banners and their sleeves they had the five wounds of Christ, and took an oath to restore the Church, suppress heretics, preserve the king and his issue, and drive from him base-born men and ill counsellors. These, however, were only the signs of the influence of the monks in exciting the insurrection. Far deeper and more truly its cause, as afterwards found from prisoners, was the hope of removing such evils as the enclosure of the land, the rise of prices, and the want of work. The insurgents were soon 40,000 strong, and set out on the march to London, under a local gentleman named Aske, proclaiming their progress as the Pilgrimage of Grace. York and Hull were presently seized, and to make matters worse the other northern counties joined the insurrection.

At court all was confusion and alarm, and the Tudor dynasty trembled in the balance. The king had no standing army to oppose them; nothing indeed but a few palace guards. Had the rebels marched quickly to London, the Reformation would for the time have been ruined. But the Duke of Norfolk, having summoned the levies of loyal shires, was sent to oppose them. Having seized Doncaster, he delayed their advance by dexterous negotiations, persuading the king to offer a general pardon, and sending emissaries among them to promote dissension, till they began to fall away from their standards.

Tempestuous weather came to the king's help a little later, and swelled the streams so that they could not cross them when at last they determined to advance, and finally, by the end of October, they had dispersed, and the king's army was sent home again as no longer needed. But the insincerity of Henry, and the restlessness of the people, left a dangerous excitement over all the north, which broke out into open rebellion again a few months later.

Henceforth, there was no real danger. The Reformation had finally triumphed. But the changes it had brought, which, though veiled, had been immense, were bitterly opposed, as far as safety allowed, by men who, like Gardiner, while forced to see the Church independent of the Pope, hated every alteration of its doctrine or constitution.

While the clouds were gathering in the summer for the great northern storm, the New Era had made another departure which decided its character for ever. Ten years had passed since Tyndale's New Testament had found its way to England, where it had from the first been eagerly sought and circulated in secret by thousands, in spite of every effort of the bishops. The gaol, the pillory, and the stake had been tried, but without effect, for men's hearts were set on knowing the truth at first hand, and would not be balked. Before 1530, three editions had been sold, and in that year a revised and corrected edition had been issued and had reached England.

Thanks to Anne Boleyn and Cromwell, with his "Testament learned by heart," Henry, as we have seen, had at last forced Convocation to take action, under Cranmer's guidance, in providing a Bible for the people. While prohibiting Tyndale's Testament, he had issued his command that they should themselves, with the help of the best scholars, make a new translation, "that the people might not be ignorant of the law of God." Had they been wise, they would have seized the opportunity of preparing a version as innocent, from their point of view, as possible, and of thus securing for themselves at once prestige

and safety. But the Reformation, from first to last, was not to emanate from the clergy, but to be forced on them. They had submitted to the crown only on compulsion; the law against heretics had been modified against their will; they had been reluctantly compelled to abandon the canon law when it conflicted with that of the land; to abate their fees in their courts, and for their various official services, and to accept the Act respecting pluralities and non-residence. In the same way, they were to show themselves the steady opponents, to the end, of any forward steps in religious reform. Their own resolution of Convocation to prepare an authorized edition was simply ignored, where it was not openly opposed, as it was by Stokesley. To have shown any zeal in the undertaking would have been to stultify their declaration, made so lately as May, 1530, that "it was not necessary to set forth the Scriptures in the vulgar tongue."[1] They had acted at all only under fear of the king, and, even when they affected compliance with Cranmer's arrangements to carry out the work, did nothing more.

Tyndale had, meanwhile, been laboriously improving his Testament, and had added to it a translation of the "Lessons" from the Old Testament, as given in the Primer of Salisbury, then much in use. They included not only extracts from the books of the Pentateuch, which he had already translated, but also from many other parts of the Old Testament, as well as from the apocryphal books. These he now appended to a new edition of his Testament, and issued them with it, in 1534, supplying England with a book very much like the "Church Service" now in use. He had translated, besides, the Book of Jonah, and this, with his Pentateuch, was also published.[2]

It was clear, therefore, that if the Church did not itself provide an English Bible, it would soon be supplied by volunteers, and be forced upon it. Tyndale's hopes were every day

[1] Burnet, Ref. i. 325.

[2] A copy presented by Tyndale to Anne Boleyn, in gratitude for her favour shown to his labours, is still in existence.

brighter, of living to see his countrymen have the Word of God in their own language. For eight years men had been treated as criminals for having even his New Testament, but its enemies had so utterly failed in their attempts to prohibit its use, that they had almost given up the struggle, and any one might now get even his edition with the Old Testament lessons, and read it in private.

The dogged obstinacy of the Old Party was fighting a vain battle against the inevitable and the right. While they were trying to put off the whole scheme till an opportunity came for openly crushing it, diligent students had been at work on the Continent, and had now almost completed their labours. Miles Coverdale, a Yorkshireman, who had been educated in the Augustine friary at Cambridge, under Dr. Barnes, and had thus belonged to Bilney's circle, had been named to Tunstal, in 1528, as heretical,[1] and had had to flee to Hamburg for his life. There we find him, in 1529, at work with Tyndale and John Rogers, also a Cambridge man, and English chaplain at Antwerp, in completing the translation of the whole Bible into English, which, except that of the Apocrypha, was effected before Tyndale's death. A printer having soon after been found at Zurich, reformed through Zwinglius since 1523, the printing had been finished in October, 1535, and now, in 1536, on the eve of the great Peasant Risings, when the Romanists were plotting the overthrow of the new order of things, the book appeared in England, as a great folio, published with the royal sanction, and dedicated to the king. The complete Bible was at last within the reach of Englishmen, and on it, as an immovable and indestructible foundation, the English Reformation was henceforth to rest. But it is never to be forgotten that it was not to the Old Church we owe this momentous gift, but to the Reformers, supported by Henry VIII. The convictions kindled in the king's mind by Tyndale's writings, which we

[1] Foxe, v. 40.

know him to have read, and the evangelical zeal of Anne Boleyn, Cromwell, Cranmer, and Latimer, secured this mighty blessing for England. Coverdale, in his preface, gives Henry full credit for having forced on the Church the light it was determined, if possible, to exclude; and his title-page still more strikingly embodies the fact. The engraving on it represents the king on the throne, holding in each hand a book, on which is written, "The Word of God." One of these he is giving to the primate, Cranmer, to a bishop, and a group of priests—the collective symbol of the Church, with the words, "Take this and teach;" the second, on the opposite side, he is handing to Cromwell and the lay peers, with the words, "I make a decree that, in all my kingdom, men shall tremble and fear before the living God."

But the main agent in procuring for England this priceless gift was now about to pass to his reward. Watched incessantly by the emissaries of the English bishops, Tyndale had at last been treacherously arrested in May, 1535, a month before his great enemy, More, was beheaded. Handed over to the keeping of the emperor, at Antwerp, he had lain in prison since then, winning golden opinions even from the public prosecutor, as "a good and godly man,"[1] and gaining over "his gaoler, his daughter, and others of his household" to the truth; his days and nights being meanwhile given to the great work of his life, by the help of his "Hebrew Grammar, Hebrew Bible, and Hebrew Dictionary," which had been allowed him, at his petition.

Cranmer and Cromwell did what they could to deliver him, but it was equally hopeless to move either Henry or Charles in behalf of one who, whatever his merits, was a Lutheran, and at last, in the autumn of 1536, he followed in the long train of martyrs for whom Rome has one day to give an account. "If they shall burn me," he had said, eight years before, "they

[1] Foxe, v. 127.

shall do none other thing than I look for." "There is none other way into the kingdom of life than through persecution and suffering of pain, and of very death, after the ensample of Christ." But, had he known it, his work was done, for Coverdale's Bible, which was really his translation with Coverdale's revision, was already officially sanctioned in England. He could scarcely have known that this great triumph had been won, for his last words were, "Lord, open the king of England's eyes;" but won it was not the less surely, and the news of it was known in the heavens to which death introduced him, if not in his cell at Vilvorde. Like a true hero, he had fought the fight, and finished the course, and kept the faith: his work was done, and, having served his master so well, he was let thus early enter into His rest.

NOTE.—The noble example of Germany was the ideal of the Reformers in reference to the sequestration of Church or Monastic property. There, they had seen the income of each benefice left, as a rule, untouched, and devoted to its former objects; the property of Hospitals and Alms-Houses also kept sacred to their use, and that of Monasteries devoted largely to founding schools and aiding University education. Part of it also went to found the noble female boarding-schools and homes of some parts of the country. Herzog. xiv. 181.

The intimate relations of the English Reformers with the German extended to an identity of their views in this matter. Had they had their will, what a country should we now have had! All our people would have been educated thoroughly for the last 300 years! Nor would even this have been half of the blessings they would have secured us by their magnificent schemes of wise beneficence.

CHAPTER XVII.

FIFTEEN HUNDRED AND THIRTY-SEVEN.

A FRESH outbreak of the northern rebellion disturbed the month of February, 1537, but it was speedily suppressed, and there only remained the vengeance usual in those days. Henry's commands were worthy of him, and, like much besides in his life, entitle him, beyond most, to a place in that river of blood in which Dante saw the souls of tyrants

> "As high as to their brow immersed,
> Wailing aloud their merciless crimes."[1]

Norfolk was, "in anywise, to cause such dreadful execution to be done upon a good number of the inhabitants of every town, village, and hamlet that has offended in this rebellion, as well by the hanging them up in trees, as by the quartering of them, and the setting of their heads and quarters in every town, as may be a fearful spectacle to all others;" and the monks and canons of certain abbeys named were to be similarly treated, when "in anywise faulty." It was not till seven months after the rebellion that the royal monster had sufficiently slaked his thirst for blood to tell Norfolk "to remember they be our subjects, though evil men and offenders."[2]

The leaders were more deliberately dealt with. On any

[1] Inferno, Canto xii.

[2] State Papers, i. 537, 565.

evidence or on none they were executed, the indisputable authority of Sir Thomas More respecting the judges of his day making it certain that "fair pretences will never be wanting when sentence is to be given in the prince's favour."[1] In spite of previous pardon, all who had taken a prominent part in the rising were arrested and put to death, after a form of trial. The spectacle was now seen for the first time in England, except in the case of Cardinal Fisher, of dignified ecclesiastics treated as only equal to other citizens in the eyes of the law. Humbler men in holy orders had already suffered, but now abbots were hung on gibbets, with no more hesitation than common peasants. Among the Lincolnshire prisoners, two abbots and a monk suffered, and among those from the north, the great Abbots of Fountains and Jervaulx, in Yorkshire, likewise died on the scaffold. Robert Aske, the leader of the revolt, though he had been pardoned in the autumn and invited to court, was condemned and hung in chains from one of the towers of York, for alleged participation in some new disturbances. A number of knights and a peer, Lord Darcy, were likewise executed, and Lady Bulmer was burned at Smithfield. Darcy died with a malediction on Cromwell, whom he accused as the cause of all the executions; but it must have been only as Henry's agent, willing and sometimes harsh, it may be, but always subordinate, and always under the compulsion of mortal fear for himself if slackness were shown in carrying out Henry's commands. A letter sent by the king in answer to the wish of the Earl of Sussex that an old soldier, condemned at this time for a share in the Lancashire rising, should be pardoned, shows on whom the guilt of these cruel doings should rest. "Concerning the old man, whom you wrote to have respited," says Henry, "upon the lamentation he made at the bar, and the allegation

[1] Utopia: Burnet's Translation, 37. How completely does this chapter of Utopia refute Mr. Green's theory that Henry was the passive, or comparatively passive spectator of the creation of a despotism for him, in Church and State, by Wolsey and Cromwell.

of his service, thrice heretofore, against the Scots, and otherwise, done to Us: albeit we cannot but take your respite of him in good part, yet, considering he has so often received our wages, and would, nevertheless, at the last, be corrupted against Us, we think him, for an example, more worthy to suffer than the rest, that before had no experience of our princely puissance, nor have received any benefit of Us; and so remit him unto you to be executed, according to his judgment given, for his offences committed against Us." Surely Tiberius or Nero never wrote anything more heartless or more brutal.

Yet it was a cause of thankfulness for England that these revolts were so quickly put down. The monks and friars, as Machiavel said in his "Vindication," published, while these tumults were convulsing the country, were "the Janizaries of the Papacy." "They held," he says, "almost a third part of all the land of Europe," and had held much more of the surface of England: "Princes and governors" were "only their bravos and hangmen," and "the least fibre of this plant," left unrooted up, "would overrun again the whole vineyard of the Lord." Had Henry not crushed these risings, men like Gardiner, and Stokesley, and Nix would have kindled the fires of Smithfield over the whole land, till they had quenched our dawning religious liberty, as Lollardism had been trampled out in the generations after Wycliffe. Had Aske and Darcy succeeded, England would have been a Protestant shambles, such as men saw erelong in the Netherlands and France.

In the month of August, 1536, Cromwell had issued an injunction, on the first announcement of the completion of Coverdale's Bible, requiring "every parson or proprietary" of every parish church in England to provide, before the 1st of August, 1537, a copy of "the whole Bible, both in Latin and also in English," and to lay it in the church choir, "for every man that will to read and look therein." No one was to be discouraged from reading any part of it, but rather counselled to study it soberly and modestly, avoiding controverted passages,

and using the rest as "the very word of God, and the spiritual food of men's souls." The great folio edition thus referred to had shortly after been published, and doubtless had been to some extent introduced to the churches as Cromwell desired. But 1537 was to see another edition of Coverdale's Bible issued, as a second private venture, like the first. One of Tyndale's companions on the Continent, mentioned already, had been one John Rogers, a Cambridge man, afterwards English chaplain at Antwerp, where Tyndale and Coverdale found him, and won him over to the reformed faith. What his share in the revision of Tyndale's Old Testament was cannot be exactly known, but he and Coverdale aided as far as they had opportunity, and the second edition had been corrected for the press by him. He was hereafter to be a prebendary of St. Paul's, and the first martyr under Queen Mary, but for the present, and indeed until Edward VI.'s time, remained on the Continent. A second edition of Coverdale's Bible had been undertaken by Grafton and Whitchurch, the king's printers, before that of Rogers was published, Cromwell having obtained the royal permission. It appeared in August, 1537, with the significant words in red type across the title, "Set forth by the king's most gracious license." The cost to the printer, for an edition of 1,500, had been £500, a sum equal to £6,000 now; but he was protected from competition for three years, and the clergy were required to buy copies for the churches. So great was the demand, however, that one publisher proposed to bring out a small Bible for easier use by private readers, and several editions of Tyndale's Testament had been issued in 1536. Twenty-five editions of it had been issued since 1526,[1] and the demand was constantly increasing, for men might now read the Scriptures at home as well as in the churches.

To Cranmer and the Reformers this fresh issue of the whole English Bible was a source of great joy. "As for the translation,"

[1] Blunt's English Bible, 46, 47, note.

he wrote to Cromwell, "so far as I have read, I like it better than any other hitherto made, yet not doubting that there may and will be found some fault therein, as you know no man ever did or can do so well, but it may be from time to time amended. I pray you, my lord, that you will exhibit the book to the king's grace, and obtain, if you can, a license that it may be sold and read by every person without danger of any act, proclamation, or ordinance, hitherto granted to the contrary, until such time as we, the bishops, shall set forth a better translation, *which, I think, will not be till a day after doomsday*."[1] Cromwell was equally zealous, and at once did as requested, filling Cranmer's heart with "gladness and gratitude." "He should hear of his good deed," wrote the Archbishop, "at the last day. Such knowledge would result from it, that it would be seen he had done excellent service both to God and the king. It had been a greater pleasure to himself than a gift of £1,000 (=£12,000). The Bishop of Worcester—Latimer—was also highly obliged to him."

The Ten Articles passed in 1536 by Convocation at the dictation of Henry had meanwhile been found unsatisfactory. Instead of promoting union they had increased division, for each side gave them its own colour. Though ably written, moreover, they needed explanation and comment, for the clergy were in many cases exceedingly ignorant. Neither Parliament nor Convocation met this year, however, and a Special Commission was therefore summoned to meet at the Archbishop's house at Lambeth, to prepare a fuller Manual of Faith, alike for public and private use. Twenty-one bishops and twenty-five of the foremost theologians formed the body to whose care this first official exposition of the doctrine of the English Church was entrusted. Gardiner and Stokesley were the chief representatives on the Romish side; Hilsey, Fox, and Cranmer, on that of the Reformers, for Latimer was to a large extent indifferent

[1] Strype, i. 126, date, August 4, 1537.

to doctrinal distinctions, devoting himself rather to practical religion, as if our practice did not always depend greatly on our opinions.

The plague was raging that summer in London, but the discussions of the Commission dragged on from April to August, till Latimer frankly owned that "he had lever be poor parson of Kynton again, than continue, thus, Bishop of Worcester."[1] People were dying even at the Archbishop's gates, and the Commissioners were anxious to be away from so dangerous a neighbourhood.

By the beginning of August, however, the book was virtually finished, and was sent to Cromwell to be submitted to Henry. But the king did not choose, for some reason, to let it be published under his immediate authority, though it was issued by the "King's Printer." Hence it appeared as "The Bishops' Book," with only the recommendation of the Commission, not, as afterwards, in subsequent editions as "The King's Book." Henry, however, in ordering it to be printed, expressed himself satisfied with it, so far as he had read it, and commanded that part of it should be read from the pulpits every Sunday and Feast-day, for the next three years. Yet "The Bishops' Book" was in no sense a reliable expression of the opinions of either the Romanists or Reformers, lay or clerical. It represented only the theology of Henry, who dictated the faith of the nation with a serene confidence in his divine right to do so. He himself had drawn up the Ten Articles "with his own pen,"[2] and sent them to the Convocation for acceptance, that they might be published as the result of their deliberations. They were then sent forth to the people with a proclamation, "willing, requiring, and commanding that all accept them." In the same way, the draft of the Bishops' Book was at once sent to the king, who

[1] Strype, i. 108.

[2] Lord Herbert's Life of Henry VIII., ed. 1672, p. 466. Wilkin's Concilia, vol. iii. p. 825.

"diligently perused, corrected, and augmented it at his leisure," keeping it for five or six months to do so, and then returning it to Cranmer for his annotations. These having been made, it was returned to Henry with an humble letter from the Archbishop, and it saw the light at last, only after his criticisms had been approved or rejected by the supreme will.[1]

Thus neither the clergy nor the English people had any free voice either in the Ten Articles or the Bishops' Book, and it is an error to treat them as the recorded sentiments of the Church or of the age. The Protestantism of England never had an opportunity of public speeeh, for the whip, the gaol, and the stake awaited any one who went on a step ahead of the royal pleasure. Neither the hierarchy nor the clergy were free, and the people had no lay representation at all in religious matters.

Yet the Bishops' Book was coloured by the agitations of the time. The Ten Articles had utterly failed to restore that union of belief which Henry still fancied he had the right, as supreme head of the Church, to demand, and the power to enforce. The country was divided into two hostile camps, for and against the Reformation. Every village ale-house, every forge, every gathering of the people, every pulpit, and every market cross was the scene of bitter disputes. Fierce words passed in all parts, for and against the New Learning, the sinlessness of Mary, or the reverse,—about Ave Marias and Paternosters, about the honour, that is, worship, to be paid to the saints, a question touching pilgrimages, intercessions, and much else in the Romish theology. Purgatory itself was a fierce fire. "Soul-priests," said Latimer, "might sing till they be blear-eyed, and say till they have worn their tongues to the stumps, without bringing us out of hell, guilty creatures as we be." Ballads flew thick. To laugh at purgatory was touching the Church in the tenderest part, its chest. The "many idle and slothful lubbers," as their opponents called them, coarsely enough, who "fed" so "fat" on

[1] Strype's Cranmer, i. 109, 110.

the wealth it brought, "swelled as if a wasp had stung them" when it was attacked.

The new book was designed to end this state of things by supplying a fuller manual of faith than the Ten Articles provided. It contained an Exposition of the Creed, the Sacraments, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ave Maria, and two chapters on Justification and Purgatory. Retaining the great principle that all things are to be determined only "according to the true meaning of Scripture;" insisting on man's salvation as derived only from the atoning death of Christ, without any share of merit from good works; leaving marriage open to all without exception, though commending celibacy as preferable, it yet in other points receded from the standard of the Articles. Besides the three which they mention—Baptism, The Eucharist, and Penance—the four other Romish Sacraments were acknowledged, though only a subordinate importance was ascribed to them. It shut out from salvation all outside the pale of the Catholic Church, but it spoke of the Church of Rome as only one member of that great whole.

Transubstantiation had gradually come to be almost the only point, beyond the three Creeds, which united the faith of the mass of the people. Cranmer himself firmly believed it. "Since this Catholic faith, which we hold respecting the real presence," he wrote this very year, "has been declared to the Church from the beginning by such evident and manifest passages of Scripture, and the same has also been commended to the ears of the faithful with so much clearness and diligence by the first ecclesiastical writers; do not, I pray, persist in wishing any longer to carp at or subvert a doctrine so well grounded and supported."[1] On the other hand, while the Archbishop of York held tenaciously to Apostolic Succession, Cranmer thought that priests and bishops needed no consecration, and were sufficiently set apart to their office if simply nominated by the crown.

[1] Letter to Vadian. Zurich Letters, 14.

How far the Primate's views were toned down by Henry in the Bishops' Book can never be known. Gentle in disposition and pure-spirited beyond his age,[1] he had a hard position, with men like Gardiner on one side, watching for his life if he advanced heresy, and Henry on the other manipulating all he wrote. His deep knowledge of the Scriptures, and familiarity with the Fathers, from whom he had gathered extracts filling many volumes, qualified him especially for his work; but without his sweet equality of temper, and stout-heartedness for what he believed to be true, they would have been of little avail. What he strove to do we partly know: what the opposition of the Romish party and the Crown prevented his carrying out, is known only to the Master he sought so faithfully to serve.

The fierce efforts of Cardinal Pole and other conspirators to bring about war against Henry had one effect which cannot be sufficiently deplored. The coast had been left so unprotected that French and Spanish vessels ran into the harbours and fought there, to the great danger of the towns at hand: piracy, also, was rife. The navy existed only in name. To provide defences and ships, the abbey lands were gladly utilized, and sold at low prices, and thus the means by which the Reformers hoped to provide schools and other aids for the people were sunk and lost.

A bright gleam of hope for the country, now, however, shone out, only to be presently in part eclipsed. On the 12th October Queen Jane gave birth to a son, and thus the Crown had, at last, an heir of unquestioned legitimacy. His birth was a transition from universal anxiety to unbounded rejoicing, for the Old Party could not now hope to begin a civil war at Henry's death, and the crowd of pretenders were made powerless. The confident assertion that the king was without a son as a curse from God for his treatment of the Pope and the Church, was, moreover, silenced. "There is no less rejoicing," wrote

[1] Hook's Eccles. Biog., iv. 251.

Latimer, "for the birth of our prince, whom we hungered for so long, than there was, I trow, among the neighbours, at the birth of John the Baptist."

But the joy was soon to be dashed with sorrow, for eleven days after her son was born the queen lay dead. It was perhaps well for her that she thus escaped the risk of outliving Henry's regard, but for the time it was a great calamity to the nation. The strictest precautions were taken to guard the baby's life; his food was always tasted for fear of poison; his room was shut off from all approach, except by those specially permitted, and a minute watchfulness kept up continually, as if it were only thus that he could be kept from following his mother to the grave.

Henry professed great grief at her death, but its depth may be measured by the fact that he wrote on the very day she expired to his ambassadors, Gardiner, in France, and Howard, in Germany, to seek another wife for him; and forthwith inquiries were set afoot at every leading court of Europe. Henry in fact had no heart, and his mock sensibility at any time was at best like the skin of soil sometimes found over icebergs, in the frozen north. In a few weeks he had not only calmed down, but was busy with negotiations for a fourth wife.

Latimer was now at the height of his popularity, and his name was in every one's mouth. In the autumn he had been in his diocese trying to stir up the clergy by vigorous injunctions, for the Italian cardinal who had held the see before had left them to themselves. Many had no New Testaments, others had no Bible; processions took the place of sermons, and communicants did not know even the Lord's Prayer in English. The clergy were now required to get a Latin and English Testament, and read a chapter a day at least, and to get also a copy of the Bishops' Book, which is mentioned by its other name, "The Institution of a Christian Man." No monks or friars were to be allowed to preach in the churches.

But the eager, earnest bishop, was also often in London

preaching. We get glimpses this year of him and Dr. Barnes, now less rash than of old, and Dr. Crome, and Taylor, Rector of St. Peter's, Cornhill, busy spreading the truth from the pulpit, and otherwise, and greatly in favour among the people. The tide of reformation was rising in London, but it was now for a time to be checked, so far as the Old Party and Henry could hinder it. The Bishops' Book and the Ten Articles represent the limits it reached while the king lived. The progress made in the last few years had been immense.

It was only four years since Latimer's visit to Bristol had raised fierce religious tumults, and drawn on him a prohibition from preaching in the diocese without the bishop's license. Even then his preaching had drawn such crowds both in Bristol and London that the pews broke down, and he was still as popular, and inveighed as earnestly as ever against the idols, impostures, and darkness, so thick around. The Romish clergy were still as fierce as ever against him. The Church, in all its orders, was moved to meet him at his coming wherever he appeared. "Had he not attacked pilgrimages, and much else, and did not Christ say that if any one left father or mother or brethren for His sake he would get a hundred-fold more even here, and did not this clearly apply to the man who left home to visit Our Lady of Walsingham, or St. Anne of the Wood, now, alas, well-nigh ruined by last year's visitation?" But they could do nothing now. Then, they brought him into imminent danger of his life; now, men were no longer burned for speaking against the Pope, or for reading the Scriptures in English; image-worship had received great discouragement, even purgatory was left an open question, and Latimer, the most hated of the Reformers, no longer hunted for heresy, was high in office in the Church, and a special favourite of the king.

The confiscation of the lands and property of the monasteries went on through 1537, a second visitation being ordered. Spoliation, even to the destruction of the buildings themselves, was unfortunately the rule, but the spirit kindled by the risings

in the north which the monks had incited, left no pity in Government for their fate. Even Stokesley, fiercely Romish as he was, declared that the destruction of all the abbeys and monasteries was inevitable from their corruption, and this not in England alone but, sooner or later, throughout Christendom. The iron hand of the king was closing on one after another throughout the year, but the great abbeys still held out. Once more, however, Englishmen saw the strange sight of an abbot hung up like a common man. Robert Hobbes, Abbot of Woburn, had, in a moment of weakness as he thought it, accepted the Oath of Supremacy in 1536, and was dying of a broken heart at his fancied sin. Some words, innocent enough at other times, but judged harshly under the remembrance of the Pilgrimage of Grace, were reported against him by some of his monks, now eager to get away from the restraints of their conventual life; and erelong he was carried off to London to choose between life and death. But he stood true to his conscience, and died like a man for it at Tyburn.

One sign of the times as the year closed was very significant. A'Becket had been the greatest English saint, and the pilgrims to his shrine were countless. But Parliament now forbade his festival day to be any longer kept, including it with a number of others. No bells were to be rung, the churches were to be left unadorned, nor were there to be any processions, or other customs as heretofore. The eve of the day had till now been kept as a fast, but Cranmer this year, taking no notice of it, ate flesh and supped with his family in his parlour. Old things were passing away; the question was, what the new would be like that were slowly rising out of the chaos of that which had perished.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE STRUGGLE AGAINST REFORM.

THE year 1538 opened with a web of negotiations for a fourth wife to Henry; the Romish party trying hard to get a match made which would turn Henry against the Reformation; the Reformers, under Cromwell's lead, still hoping for one that would link English to German Protestantism. But the king was now for the time disposed to make a new league with Charles, and felt more coldly to the New Learning than formerly.

Meanwhile the destruction of the monasteries and abbeys went on. They stood roofless and ruined, everywhere: the money raised for their "stock and store, household stuff and church ornaments, plate, lead from the roofs, and bells," going first to pay any debts of the establishments, and then to the king. Here and there voices were being raised in behalf of exceptional cases of honest worth, amidst the prevailing corruption. The six commissioners wrote to Cromwell that "the abbess of Pollesworth nunnery in Warwickshire, is a very sad, discreet, and religious woman of sixty, who had been abbess twenty-seven years and had under her twelve virtuous and religious nuns, none of whom would leave their habit and religion." They pray that the house may stand, "for the town has only forty-four tenements, and never a plough but one—nearly all living by the nunnery, in which from thirty to

forty or more children of gentlemen are right virtuously brought up."

Latimer writes on behalf of the Prior of Malvern, who was not in his diocese, but was "an honest man," "that his priory may stand"—"not in mockery, God forbid"—but any other way, as the king may think fit, so as to maintain preaching, teaching, studying, with prayer, and "good housekeeping, to which the prior is much given, and is much commended in those parts. He is old and feedeth many, for the county is poor and full of penury, and, alas! my good lord, shall we not see two or three in every shire changed to such remedy?" But the insatiable gulf of the public and personal expenses of the king, and the remorseless greed of the courtiers, were fatal to all pity or generous policy.

The virtues of some of the monks and the local benefits the abbeys and monasteries afforded had made the report of the visitors fall ineffectual on the masses. A surer way to rouse dislike was now taken by a resolute exposure of the impostures practised by the bulk of them at the popular expense. The honest love of truth native to Englishmen had already, in some cases, risen against the deceptions detected in some parts. So far back as 1532 four Suffolk lads, by the light of a bright February moon, had carried off the "idol" at Doverscourt, and had burned it in the fields: a deed for which three of them were swinging in chains, on the spot, within six months—the fourth, only, managing to escape. But times were now changed, and the practical idolatry then high in honour had been blown upon by the Revolution. The brave hearts that had thus led the way had indeed perished, but they had set an example which was now to overthrow the worship of figures of wood or stone, through all England. The reports of the visitors had already discredited many of the famous relics and wonder-working images hitherto so sacred. The king had signified his pleasure for the "removing of idolatrous images, wherewith the country abounds," and his officials carried out his command

zealously. In Wales an image of the Virgin was in great honour. It had been thrice set up at another place, but had come back, each time, of its own accord. A taper in its hand had burned nine years, without wasting or going out, till, at last, on some one forswearing himself before it, it went out at once. The image was now taken down: the sacred taper which had been cased in wood, was uncovered and found to burn like others. At Merston an image stood blessing a boat, in which it was reported to have conveyed the devil, it is not said whither, or whence. It was much frequented for benefit from the ague. This, also, was publicly disgraced. At Winchester, a shrine, adorned with silver to the value of nearly 2,000 marks, equal now to £13,000, was destroyed, "the mayor and others who went with the visitors praising and lauding God for what had been done and was doing; most of the plate, the vestments, copes, and hangings, being reserved to the use of the king's majesty." The image of "Our Lady of Caversham, whereto was great pilgrimage," was pulled down, with the structure on which it stood: the "lights, shrouds, crutches, and images of wax hanging about the chapel destroyed, and the chapel itself defaced, so thoroughly that there would be no farther resort to it. The principal relic of idolatry in the realm had been treasured here; an angel with one wing, that brought to Caversham the spear-head that pierced our Saviour on the cross. It was now sent off to London, "with a piece of the halter with which Judas hanged himself." At the Grey Friars, Reading, a collection of relics, the lists of which would fill "sheets of paper;" bits of the arms of St. Pancrates, St. Quentin, St. David, Mary Salome, and St. Edward the Martyr; a bone of Mary Magdalene, the stole of St. Philip, and such like, among them. A wonderful phial known as the "Blood of Hales" was taken from a monastery of the same name, in Gloucestershire. It was reputed to be the very blood of Christ, shed on the Cross, and as such was held in great veneration. No one in a state of mortal sin, it was said, could behold it, but it made itself visible

to him when, by his offerings and penitence, he had obtained absolution. This it was now found, however, was done by the phial having a dark and a clear side, which were turned to suit the case, while the contents, on its being opened before a great multitude, were found not to be blood at all, but some honey coloured with saffron. It justifies, in some measure, the destruction of shrines we now lament, to find the Abbot of Hales, himself, writing afterwards for permission to take down every "stick and stone" of the place where it had stood, "that no manner of token or remembrance of that forged relic shall remain."[1] From Maiden Bewdley Priory at Bristol was sent a bag of relics the names given to which are startling enough—God's coat, Our Lady's smock, part of the Last Supper, and part of the rock on which Christ was born at Bethlehem.

But the discovery of the imposture connected with the rood, or crucifix, of Boxley, in Kent, created perhaps the greatest sensation. The eyes of this image, on fitting occasions, moved as if it were alive; its body bowed, its forehead frowned, and it dropped its lower lip, as if to speak. Such proofs of miraculous power made the property very valuable to the monks, by attracting countless offerings. Unfortunately for them, when examined, it was found that all the motions were made by contrivances at the back, and the detected deceit was exposed in the market-place at Maidstone, where it roused "wondrous detestation and hatred" in the people, when they saw how they had been tricked. But its usefulness was not allowed to end with Maidstone: it was sent to London, and raised on a platform beside the pulpit at Paul's Cross, where it was put through its performances, and made the subject of a sermon by Hilsey of Rochester, after which it was let down among the crowd, who forthwith tore it to pieces. Such exposures were death-blows to the system that had made them possible.

The fate of another image, of great fame, which had been

[1] Quoted from MS. in Froude, iii. 101.

sent to London from Wales, is strangely linked with a characteristic incident of the times. This idol was known by the name of Darvellgadern, and was in such repute that 500 or 600 pilgrims visited it in a day. Some brought money, others cattle or horses, as offerings to the priests, for such was the confidence of the ignorant peasantry in its powers, that it was believed it could fetch any one that offered to it even out of hell itself.[1]

It happened that at this time a friar named Forrest had been sentenced to be burned for denying the king's supremacy, nothing that Cranmer or Latimer could do prevailing permanently with him to recede from his opinion. To Latimer's distress, Cromwell selected him to preach the usual sermon at the execution, and would not accept his earnest request to find some one in his place. Thus forced to the hateful office, he did what he could to move the unhappy friar. He had his pulpit set up near the stake, in the hope that his words might, even at the last, win him over, and thus save him from death. It was a strange and horrible sight, worthy of the reign in which it took place. Forrest was hung up alive by the middle and armpits from a gallows, in Smithfield, and when he utterly refused to recant and gloried in dying for the faith in which he had grown up, a fire was kindled below him, and on the top of it was thrown the Welsh idol, the poor man being burned slowly to death.[2]

The newly-published Bibles were, meanwhile, slowly leading the way to a nobler charity which would gradually make scenes like this impossible. They were now exposed for public sale, and were in such demand that two years later they had to be reprinted. The enthusiasm of the people to possess them is hard to be realized now, when the Bible is in the hands of all, as the cheapest of books. In those days, over all England, every one who could bought a copy, or went to where a public copy was chained in the parish church to read, or hear it read. The

[1] Suppression of the Monasteries, 190. [2] May 22, 1538.

old often learned their letters to be able to spell it out, and even the young caught the excitement. Not only in the Church, but in the tavern and the ale-house it was the one subject on all tongues. Strype reports an old man's recollections of the time, which bring it vividly before us. Some poor men of Chelmsford, in Essex, where the narrator's father lived, had bought a New Testament, and on Sundays sat reading it during the intervals of worship, in the lower part of the church, many flocking round to hear him as he did so, and among others, he who told the story—then a lad of about fifteen. His father, however, would not allow him to hear it, and once and again fetched him away. But the lad would not be kept from it, and having taught himself to read, he and his father's apprentice joined funds and bought a New Testament between them, hiding it under the bed-straw, and reading it when they had the chance.[1]

In May, 1538, Fox, Bishop of Hereford, died: a calamity sad enough in itself to the Reformers, but doubly so from Bonner, at this time a zealous Reformer, being put in his place —a man destined to play an evil part in coming days. His audacity had commended him to Henry for various political missions, when it was serviceable, and he had been so eager in carrying out the views of Cranmer and Cromwell that he completely hoodwinked them.

In September fresh injunctions were issued to the clergy by Cromwell to secure the ground thus far gained. Obedience to former injunctions was imperatively ordered. The Creed, the Ten Commandments, and the Lord's Prayer, were to be taught the people in English by the clergy; they were to preach at least once a quarter; to teach men not to trust in other men's works, or in pilgrimages, or relics, or in saying over beads. Images abused by pilgrimages, or by offerings made to them, were to be taken down; no candles were to be lighted before any image, but only before the cross, the sacrament, and "the

[1] Strype's Cranmer, i. 142.

sepulchre," and no one was to hinder the free reading of the Scriptures, though care was to be taken that no unseemly disputes respecting them should be heard either in churches or in less worthy places.

To promote morality it was required that the banns of marriage be regularly published, and that all baptisms, marriages, and deaths should be registered. But even so sensible an order was turned to evil by the clergy. They "blow abroad," says Cromwell, "that the king intends to tax baptisms." Opposition was still bold. Many "hummed and hawed" in reading the injunctions, so that few could understand, and the parishioners were told to stick to the old way as the best.

The destruction of the monasteries had involved that of many of the shrines connected with them, but Cromwell, in August, hastened the work of destruction by an order to the magistrates and sheriffs of each county, to go to the cathedrals, churches, or chapels, having shrines, "at which prayers were offered that were due to God only, ignorant people thus falling into great error and idolatry," and to level them to the ground. The relics, and reliquaries,[1] the gold, silver, or jewels, were to be sent to the king.[2] Times had indeed changed, for the bones to be thus roughly unhoused had been worshipped for centuries as the memorials of saints so dear to God that their least remains were watched from heaven as sacred, wrought wondrous miracles, and diffused a sweet smell around them. But imposture had long made a trade in the noblest feelings of our nature, and it was well that the whole baleful traffic in holy fraud should be stopped for ever. Forthwith, all over the land, the shrines were levelled so completely that, by the close of the year, every one of them had utterly disappeared.

The injunctions had already forbidden honours to be paid any longer at Becket's shrine at Canterbury—his reputation as a martyr to popular liberty making him peculiarly odious to a man

[1] The box or casquet for relics. [2] Strype's Cranmer, i. 211.

like Henry. Now, however, every memorial of him was to be destroyed. In his person the Church had tried to dominate the State nearly four centuries before, and the victory of the State in the final conflict just ending was to be signalized by his contemptuous degradation. What had claimed to be the blood of the martyr, and had been exhibited for the homage of countless pilgrims for generations, was found, like the blood of Hales, to be an imposition, and the discovery stimulated the iconoclasts. His coffin was "of inestimable price, all of pure gold, most thickly studded with beautiful jewels and pearls."[1] The shrine was of stone for about six feet, and above that of wood, containing the martyr's bones and skull in an iron chest. These were forthwith burned, that they might not any longer be used for superstitious purposes. The gold and precious stones filled two great chests, each of which required six or seven strong men to lift it.[2] In keeping with the imposture which elsewhere, in different places, exhibited as the blood of Christ, coloured honey, at Hales; a piece of red silk, at another place; and some oil coloured with dragon's blood, at a third; it was found that, besides the head of Becket in the iron chest, another was shown to the pilgrims.[3] A proclamation was presently issued, that from henceforth he should not be regarded as a saint, but as a traitor, and that his images and pictures through the whole realm should be destroyed in all the windows and on all the walls of churches, chapels, and other places, his name erased from all service-books, and his festival day no longer observed.[4]

The long-threatened thunders of the Pope burst forth at last on the news of this sacrilege. The Emperor had at once broken off any approach to a marriage alliance with so audacious a heretic as Henry, and since France and Spain were at peace,

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[1] Giustiniani's Despatches, i. 84. [2] Stowe's Annals, p. 575.

[3] Cranmer to Cromwell. Misc. Letters temp. Henry VIII., 3rd Series, vol. ix. Date, August 18th, 1538.

[4] Burnet Ref. iii., part ii. Appendix B iii., pp. 206, 207.

and all Europe was outraged at the burning of the bones of one who was famous everywhere as a saint, it seemed a fitting moment to launch the long-prepared Bull of Deposition. Henry and his accomplices were required to appear at Rome and answer for their conduct; otherwise, the Pope deprived him of his crown; them of their estates; and all of Christian burial. Henry's subjects were absolved from all oaths and obligations to him: he was declared infamous: all nobles and others in his dominions were required to rise against him, and all kings were ordered, by virtue of the obedience they owed the Holy See, to make war against him, and to make slaves of such of his subjects as they could seize. Was the Pope wrong in uttering such a document? If not, it must be right to look on Victoria now in the same light, and to visit her with the same curses.

But the time was past when Roman bulls could shake kingdoms, and the only direct action taken by Henry, in answer to all this violence, was a paper signed by all the bishops, including those most devoted to the Pope, repudiating his authority, and denying his right to stir up war.

The negotiations set on foot by Cranmer and Cromwell for a possible alliance of the English and German Churches to strengthen the common cause had been kept up through the spring and summer, and a deputation of German Reformers had even been in London from May to August, to further it if possible. Its members had, however, met with little favour from Henry, who found them indisposed to submit to his imperious despotism in matters of faith.

The Old Party professed themselves outraged at the very proposal of such an alliance. That the primate should even think of official relations with non-episcopal Lutherans was in their eyes a public scandal. The Germans, moreover, were not orthodox on the Romish doctrine of the Mass, of which Henry was very tenacious, pluming himself on his fidelity to it. Many English Reformers, also were less prudent than zealous in their dislike of it, and other Romish doctrines. They were accused

of calling the wafer only a bit of bread: one was alleged to have said that he would as soon see an oyster-shell above the priest's head at the sacring time, as the wafer, and that, if a knave priest could make God, he would hire such a God-maker by the year, and give him twenty pounds to make fishes and fowls: another—that it was as lawful to baptize a child in a tub as in a church font; that our Lady could do no more with Christ than another sinful woman; that holy water is only water juggled. The mass was still sacred to the bulk of Englishmen, and free speech, though it could not be repressed, was as yet permitted only on the stronger side. Ballads and mystery plays ridiculed transubstantiation, and the other Romish doctrines, to the intense fury of the Romanists. Plain words cut to the heart in proportion to their truth and aptness, and in such days conventional phrases are apt to be discarded.[1] Men who had seen neighbours bearing the faggot; or whipped at the cart's tail; or thrown into loathsome dungeons; or burning at the stake, on the accusation of some clerical spy, and by the sentence of clerical judges, could ill brook the reports so rife, of the lewdness, the ill-gotten wealth, the hatred of the Scriptures, and the shameless impostures of the priests, or think reverently

[1] Mr. Froude and Mr. Green quote the words hocus pocus as a Protestant corruption, at this time, of the words of consecration—*Hoc est corpus*—"This is (my) body." But they were already the conjuror's jargon of all Europe, and cannot be ascribed to Protestants of any period, though it is possible that they may have risen in the Romish Middle Ages from an irreverent satire on the consecrating words. One would suppose, however, that, even if they had, it was no great wonder, when the priesthood, by their worthlessness, had brought religion itself into contempt with too many. Yet it is a question if hocus pocus come from this root at all. "Ochus bochus" was the gibberish used anciently by Italian conjurors, and since the words used to be spelt ockés bockés, or okés boks, they may very possibly have risen from ochs—the ox, and bock—the goat, which were frequent sacrifices, and as such had incantations uttered over them. Not to mention other fancied derivations, Hūk Pūk is in Polish—"Look out!" Besides, the words may be mere sound without sense.

of the doctrines, in themselves so open to attack, with which they were identified.

But the Old Party were far from willing to submit quietly to their opponents, and the return of Gardiner in October from France, where he had been ambassador for three years, gave them the advantage of a leader. Wily and plausible; willing to go to any lengths to gain his ends, and of stubborn tenacity in pursuing them, he was far more than a match for the weakness and simplicity of Cranmer. He found his friends shocked by the primate's having dreamed of relations with the non-episcopal Churches of Germany, though the proposal had come to nothing. The grand points in debate between them and the Lutherans had been communion in one kind, the private mass, and the celibacy of priests; to the Germans the central doctrines of Popery, but to Gardiner's party, all the more sacred on that ground. Their irritation was extreme, but unfortunately this was not the only result. The very discussion had roused Henry's old zeal for his orthodoxy, and a first sign of this was presently seen in a proclamation against married clergy. Many priests had ventured to take wives openly, though the law still forbade them doing so, and Cranmer had been privately married. Henceforth, all who had *openly* married were to be deprived of ecclesiastical office and reputed laymen, and all who should hereafter marry were to be fined and imprisoned at the royal pleasure.[1]

But such a bloodless protest against the New Opinions would not satisfy Gardiner when he returned, after the Germans had left England. He was bent on retaining everything Popish except the Pope, whom Henry had forced him outwardly to abandon. The old usages and traditions, he maintained, "were not to be broken lightly, and some in no wise," words which, from him, meant that Henry should be so dexterously managed that Popery should be preserved intact.

[1] Strype's Cranmer, bk. i. c. 18.

The three years of his absence had seen great progress made and persecution lulled. But the struggle against the Reformers was now to recommence at once, as the passion of his life. An acute diplomatist, he soon wound his toils round the king. The Landgrave of Hesse, a Protestant, on the departure of the German deputation, had written Henry urging him to repress and extirpate the Anabaptist heresy in England, lest it should endanger society and the throne, as it had done at Münster. Gardiner eagerly caught at the chance which such an opening offered, and represented to the king that strictness against sacramentaries would vindicate his orthodoxy to France and the emperor, while it was clear that it would not turn the German Protestants against him.

The first sufferers were of the proscribed sect—refugees from Germany, where, as in all Europe, their recent history made them the objects of suspicion and hatred. A commission was appointed in October, 1538, to seek them out, and the result was that four bore faggots at St. Paul's, and a man and a woman were burned at Smithfield. It is pitiful to think that Cranmer sat on the bench with Bonner and Stokesley to condemn them. So little had even the gentlest of the Reformers as yet risen above the hateful principles in which Rome had trained Christendom.

But this was only a beginning. The plot grew apace. Gardiner, Stokesley, Tunstal, and Sampson of Chichester had formed an alliance to maintain the old religion, and to oppose all innovation.[1] Henry's prejudices were skilfully awakened, day by day, till Gardiner succeeded in obtaining an order that no religious books should be translated or circulated without royal permission, and in securing a royal injunction in favour of the use of holy water, processions, and crawling to the cross, and to prohibit discussions about the mass. But this was not enough. An opportunity soon after offering of striking

[1] Strype's Eccles. Mem., i. p. 500.

home against a well-known Reformer, Gardiner seized it at once.

John Nicolson, a Norfolk man, had studied at Cambridge in Bilney's days, and, having become one of his converts, set himself to translate various Lutheran books into English. For this he had had to flee to Antwerp, to Tyndale and Frith, and there he stayed, as chaplain to the English factory, for a year and a-half, till, on Sir Thomas More's warrant, he was carried back to England, in 1532, to answer charges of heresy. Brought up before Warham, forty-five articles were given him for his answers, which fill forty-three large pages, closely printed, in Foxe, and embrace the whole breadth of Romish theology. Warham's death, however, and the rise of Queen Anne Boleyn, with Cranmer for primate, soon after set him free.

From this time he lived in London as a teacher of Greek and Latin, under the name of Lambert, to escape molestation from the priests. In 1538, happening to hear Dr. Taylor, afterwards Protestant Bishop of Lincoln, preach on the mass, Lambert after the sermon went to him, and modestly broached some difficulties on which he wished explanation. Being asked to put them in writing, he did so. Unfortunately, Taylor, in preparing to answer, asked the help, among others, of Dr. Barnes, now, as always, a hot, ill-balanced man, who persuaded him to lay them officially before Cranmer, a course which, in effect, imposed on the primate the necessity of official action. Brought before him, Lambert urged his objections to the Romish doctrine, and, on being pressed to modify them, appealed, in an evil hour, to Henry himself.

Gardiner at once saw the opportunity for committing the king to a violent course, which might, moreover, entangle Cranmer as well, and forthwith pressed the desirableness of the appeal being heard, that the royal orthodoxy might be clearly vindicated. Vain of his theology, Henry at once assented, and a day was appointed on which the case should be tried in Westminster Hall, writs being forthwith sent out, commanding all the bishops

and nobility to be present, to support the king in his public action, as supreme head of the Church.

When the day arrived, the prisoner found himself in presence of Henry, with the bishops on his right, the nobles and justices, in "their order," on his left, and a body of lawyers, in purple, behind. An armed guard stood round him, and another, very numerous, and all in white, was ranged behind the king. After a long oration from the Bishop of Chichester, the unhappy man was summoned by the king to answer for himself, but only to be bullied and browbeaten, till he was quite confused. Cranmer was then commanded to prove him wrong, but argued so gently, calling the accused man "Brother Lambert," that Gardiner, after a time, interrupted him, and though sixth in the order of disputants, began before the primate had ended. His argument for the possible presence of the body of Christ in two places at once—in heaven and in the bread of the Eucharist—deserves the attention of Anglo-Romanists now. "Did not St. Paul say," he asked, "'Have I not seen Christ?' Did not this prove that Christ was 'corporally present' in heaven and in Paul's presence at the same moment?" Tunstal, of Durham, next tried his skill, but Lambert was more than a match for him, as he had been for Cranmer and Gardiner, but he was stopped in his reply by taunts and clamour. It was reserved for Stokesley, who boasted of having burned fifty heretics, but now, himself, had he known it, had the shadow of death over him, to demonstrate the truth of the orthodox doctrine that one substance might be changed into another, as the bread was held to be changed into Christ's body. He did this by adducing the case of steam from boiling water, which, said he, "passes into the substance of air." This was reckoned an almost inspired idea, and Lambert was howled down by king and bishops alike, when he shrewdly told them that the water remained *itself*, in the air, after all.

Ten bishops in all were successively let loose on the defenceless man, and five hours spent in the despicable dispute, till

Lambert gave up the task of replying, since it was useless. At last the farce was ended, and the question asked by Henry whether he was convinced, and would he live or die? "I commend my soul to God," replied the martyr, "but my body I submit to your clemency." "Then you must die," answered Henry, "for I will not be the patron of heretics—Cromwell, read the sentence of condemnation." A few days after he was burned at Smithfield, the last words he uttered being a cry to the people—"None but Christ, none but Christ!"

CHAPTER XIX.

LIGHT AND DARKNESS.

THE year 1539 opened disastrously for the Romanists. Pole's book attacking Henry had been published in the last months of 1538, with no other result than the ruin of his family. His brothers, Henry Lord Montacute, and Sir Geoffrey, grandsons of the Duke of Clarence, were arrested, and with them the Marquis of Exeter, grandson of Edward IV., Sir Edward Neville, head of the great family of the Nevilles, Sir Nicholas Carew, and two priests and a sailor, all strong partisans of the old religion. A plot had been discovered, or was feared, and little evidence was needed when the end had been decided beforehand. Sir Geoffrey became king's evidence, though he had little to reveal, and was rewarded by being left to spend the rest of his life in the Beauchamp Tower, where there is an inscription by him as late as 1562. The rest were beheaded in the beginning of 1539. The Pope had thus lost at one blow his leading supporters, and the separation from Rome was once more made sure. But the danger he had escaped was not without its evil consequences on Henry. His imperious temper grew still more terrible and bowed all alike before his will. Human life had never been much to him, but it became less and less as he multiplied his victims.

The marriage negotiations with the emperor having been rudely broken off, and the Pope having finally launched his

thunders at the king, it became again worth while to court the Protestant princes. The possibility of an alliance of the English and Lutheran Churches was once more discussed, and with this a definite proposal for marriage with Anne, sister of John the Peaceable, Duke of Cleves—a lady of twenty-four—Henry being now forty-eight. For years back he had been suffering from incurable ulcers in his legs, and growing more and more gross in person. She was large, ungainly, and plain; without accomplishments, and ignorant of any language but Low German. Unfortunately for all concerned, she had been reported as exceptionally handsome.

The presence of Gardiner in England effectually prevented any friendly relations in Church affairs with Germany. At the end of February he induced the king to republish his proclamation of the previous November, enjoining all the superstitious ceremonies which at an earlier date had been discountenanced. The German Commissioners remonstrated, and pleaded for liberty in non-essentials, but in vain. Cromwell did his best on the right side, but it had come to be a question which should fall, Gardiner or he, and he needed to be cautious.

Meanwhile, the country rang more fiercely than ever, to Henry's rage and disgust, with religious controversy, though he had prescribed a code of opinions for universal acceptance. In one pulpit a fuller reformation was demanded; in another, the restoration of all the abuses of Rome. One denounced purgatory, another maintained it. The ceremonies lately restored had their zealous friends and equally zealous opponents. The Real Presence was discussed by priest and layman alike. Even the village ale-house, and the blacksmith's forge, had their noisy discussions of every doctrine in question between the Gospellers and the Old Party. The very churches, during service, were at times disturbed by unseemly demonstrations,[1] but, at the most,

[1] Mr. Green and Mr Froude speak of "a lawyer—a gentleman"—lifting up a dog in church when the priest raised the wafer, but both omit to

nothing took place that might not well have been left to the police. Henry, however, had no idea of any one thinking for himself. It was for him to command, and for his subjects to obey. There was to be only one creed. The Reformers and the Old Party were "to draw in one yoke."[1] He had ignominiously failed in the past in making them do so, but he would try once more.

He little knew how hopeless the task was which he assumed. The eternal laws of the human mind, the natural course of historical development, and, above all, the purpose of the Almighty, were against him. There were three great parties in the nation—on the one side, the old Romish section, who hated every change that had been made, ecclesiastical or religious; on the other, the advanced Reformers, who had broken away from the past and discarded the whole system of priestly mediation, with the doctrines by which it was defended, and held the simple evangelical truth. Unhappily, all who went to fanatical or dangerous lengths,—and at such a time of universal intellectual ferment they must have been numerous,—were confounded with these, and drew on them continual misrepresentation. Between the two were Henry's party, with whom, as yet, Latimer and Cranmer were in some ways identified, as still holding the central doctrine of the real presence. Of this party, on its Romish side, Gardiner was the head, and, as such, he regarded the reforming bishops, who were daily receding from his views and approaching those of evangelical religion, with the bitterest hatred. Henry was determined to fuse these fierce contradictions into a peaceful unity!

The readiness of Gardiner and the Romanists to buy Henry's support at any price, determined the colour of the new legal creed. The money and lands of the three hundred and seventy-six monasteries suppressed in 1536 were already swallowed up

say that he was a poor crazy man, wholly irresponsible for his acts. See Foxe, v. 251, and Hilles in Zurich Letters, 209. Gardiner, I may say, had the honour of burning the poor creature.

[1] Royal Proclamation, Rolls, Henry.

in building forts, in gambling, in reckless extravagance, and in bribes to win support. Those of the larger houses, however, were still untouched, and of these there were six hundred and forty-five, of which twenty-nine sent their abbots or priors to Parliament as mitred barons. This vast plunder Henry was bent on securing, but the reforming bishops showed only a faint zeal in his plans. Cranmer was willing that the abbeys founded by the crown should be forfeited to it, but he and his party insisted with equal earnestness and persistency on the unjustness of a wholesale confiscation of all the vast spoils to the king's pleasure. They pleaded for the foundation of colleges, grammar schools, and hospitals throughout the land, that every diocese might have a supply of adequately trained clergy, that the nation might be educated as a whole, and that the poor who were left to inexpressible misery might find refuges and aid.[1] Gardiner and the Romanists had no such scruples, or concealed them if they were felt. It was better that Henry should be bribed to their side even by the sacrifice of this vast wealth of the Church, than that he should still favour Cranmer's reforms.

Unfortunately, the Archbishop was poorly supported. The position of Cromwell was becoming insecure, especially since Gardiner returned. The nation disliked him as a commoner raised to invidious greatness, the natural right, as it still seemed in those days, of men of high birth. The nobility hated him as holding a place rightfully theirs. The spirit which even in the last century shut out Burke from office because he did not belong to the Whig oligarchy was then infinitely more exclusive. The clergy and the monks and friars hated him as the instrument of their humiliation, and of the plunder of the Church. The Members of Parliament hated him as the agent for wringing subsidies and benevolences from them, and the whole of the Romish party, Old and New, thirsted for his blood as the moving spirit of the Reformation. It was a crime, indeed, for which

[1] Strype's Cranmer, i. 160.

nothing but his ruin could atone, that, having learned the New Testament by heart, he had come to abhor the whole Popish system, and to see that the sacerdotalism of Gardiner was only the old faith with a new name. The Reformers alone stood by him, and they were too feeble to help him.

Knowing that the work he had had to do for Henry, and the honours he had received, had raised him many enemies; feeling, doubtless, moreover, that, like others in similar positions before him, he would be sacrificed without a second thought, as soon as the expediency of the moment seemed to demand it, his course was hampered on every hand. Still he bore himself bravely, and stood faithfully by his self-appointed task of conquering religious liberty for England as far as Henry permitted.

Latimer's simplicity and want of discretion, for which his bravery hardly made amends, was another source of weakness. Shaxton, Bishop of Salisbury, for the time a zealous Reformer, was proud, litigious, indiscreet, and so unstable that he became a persecutor under Mary; and Barlow of St. David's, Hilsey of Rochester, and Goodrich of Ely, the other reforming bishops, were not strong enough men for the times.

Parliament was summoned for April 28th, and great exertions were made to secure the election of men willing to vote as Henry directed. In some cases even the names of those to be chosen were sent to the burgesses, and so complete was the terrorism now reigning over England, that these names having come, in one instance, after the members had been chosen, those just elected were at once put aside, and the king's nominees elected in their stead. Direct and avowed interference with elections was indeed a characteristic of the Tudors. They, in fact, packed the House of Commons, as far as possible, with persons in the royal pay as court officials,[1] to make perfect subserviency the surer. No wonder that in all Henry's reign there was only one instance—in 1532—of the Commons refusing to

[1] Hallam's Constitutional History, 25.

pass a bill recommended by the crown,[1] and that the only hesitation ever shown was in reference to grants of money. The balance of parties in the country left Henry free to tyrannize as he chose, and crushed all manliness with rare exceptions. Even the nobility were as servile to him as the commons. They bowed to every whim of his capricious humours: they carried out any iniquity he commanded. He ruled like an Eastern caliph over a country divided by its religious feuds against itself.

On the 5th of May a royal message, brought down by Audley, informed both houses that Henry was resolved that there should be religious unity. A committee of nine members of the Upper House, all bishops, was named—five Romanists, four Reformers—to draw up articles on which all might agree. But it was of course hopeless that the two parties could ever do so, and day after day passed without result. Meanwhile, an alliance had been formed by the Pope with the Emperor and the King of France, which, on the one hand, made Henry more than ever anxious to get the wealth of the abbeys, to spend on coast defences and on warlike preparations, in case of invasion, and, on the other, to win back the loyalty of his Romish subjects, lay and clerical, and to please Charles and Francis by a strongly reactionary course in matters of religion.

While fierce disputes went on over the hopeless basis of religious union, bills of attainder were passed against those who had suffered in January for conspiracy, with the Marquis of Exeter. The Marchioness and Pole's mother, the Countess of Salisbury, were also attainted, but spared for the time, though thrown into the Tower. Eleven days had passed in fruitless debate, when Norfolk, a fierce Romanist, proposed that the Lords should consider six articles which he submitted, since the committee seemed unlikely to report. Events proved that he was the mouthpiece of the king and the Romanists. On the first question, whether any substance of bread and wine

[1] Hallam's Constitutional History, 24.

remained in the Eucharist after consecration, there could be no debate, as even the reforming bishops still held the Romish doctrine. On the rest, however—whether communion in both kinds is necessary or permitted to the laity? whether vows of chastity, made by men or women, are perpetually binding? whether private masses are of benefit to the souls of the dead? whether priests are permitted to have wives? whether compulsory auricular confession should be retained or rejected?—a fierce struggle was inevitable. Cranmer spoke fearlessly against them for three days. Cromwell, knowing that Henry wished an affirmative, was prudently silent, since nothing could hinder the king's pleasure from being complied with; but he had already determined to soften the resolutions in practice, when they became law. Both Houses of Convocation and both Houses of Parliament discussed them. Still, on the 23rd, when the Houses were prorogued for a week, no decision had been reached.

Meanwhile, however, they had had opportunity of showing their abject servility. By one Act they gave the king's proclamations the force of laws, with consent of his council—provided existing statutes were not infringed. He might inflict any punishment short of death, for anything he conceived an offence. By a second, the whole of the great abbeys, with all their lands and property, were made over to the king without conditions. Gardiner's party thus paid the odious bribe for Henry's support, and were soon to reap the reward. By this prodigious grant the king received all the land that belonged to 645 monasteries, 90 colleges of priests, and 110 hospitals. The yearly rents, at little more than half value, were £161,000—a sum equal now to about £2,000,000—a year, and there were, besides, uncounted treasures, in jewels, money, plate, cattle, furniture, &c. Such a gift might and should have made the crown independent, but Henry had to ask for a subsidy the next year. The dissatisfaction was intense through the country. Some muttered that the estates should have gone

back to the families of the founders of the abbeys: others, like Cranmer, would fain have had part of the spoil for the advancement of evangelical religion, in the foundation of new bishoprics, the aid of divinity halls, and other noble objects. But it was not to be.

Large sums from the vast receipts were spent on the defence of the coasts, much on the king's gambling-tables; a great many estates were given to the rising men about court; and others were sold at a nominal price. Most of our nobility who date their honours from this reign are indebted to the plunder of the abbeys for their richest estates. Three years of costly war which began erelong, swallowed up what was left and much treasure besides, so that six new bishoprics and eight religious houses, which were refounded, were the only salvage from the wreck of estates and property, equal to at least a third of the soil and capital of England. But the Reformers are not to blame for this. Had they had their way, things would have been very different. The Romish party was for the time in the ascendant.

When the houses met on the 30th May, Chancellor Audley informed the peers that His Majesty, with the assistance of the bishops, had decided respecting the Six Articles. This was equivalent to a command to adopt them. Henry had himself come into the House during the first debates, which was enough to overawe opposition, and, indeed, so hopeless was any attempt at it that Cromwell, though now sitting as the king's vicegerent, by special Act, in the highest seat in the House, had begged a member not to speak against them if he did not wish to be hanged or burned. Cranmer himself in fact tells us that if the king had not himself come personally to the House they would never have passed; but his presence made opposition worse than vain. It only remained, therefore, to pass a schedule of penalties, and, in spite of Cranmer's unwearied and brave opposition, one was adopted as bloody as Gardiner could have wished. On the 28th of June the whole Bill became law.

Cranmer had done all he could, for he had even declined to leave the House when Henry, in his impatience to have the matter settled, proposed that he should do so.

The penalties denounced were worthy of the party that proposed them. All who should speak, preach, or write against the doctrine of the mass were to be burned: all who should preach or dispute against the remaining five were to be imprisoned, and to forfeit their property for the first offence; for the second they were to be hanged. Transubstantiation, communion in one kind, the celibacy of the clergy, the indelibility of vows, the use of private masses, and of auricular confession, were thus once more the official creed of the nation, at its peril. All previous marriages of the clergy were annulled, and the gallows was the punishment for their marrying in the future. To neglect confession or the mass carried the same doom.

The Romanists were now in high spirits. Even abjuration was no longer permitted. The only drawback was, that they could not roast men alive or hang them, by processes in the bishops' courts, for loving the simple Gospel, but must get a jury to condemn them.

Cranmer was for a time in great danger. His wife was at once sent back to Germany. He had written by the king's command a defence of his views on the Six Articles, and his having done so was now turned against him.[1] Henry, however, needed one meek and simple, though honest and faithful to his convictions, and he was therefore spared. As soon as Parliament was prorogued, Norfolk, and Suffolk, his brother-in-law, with Cromwell, were sent to dine with him, to let him know that he was still in favour.

It was on this occasion that the hatred towards Cromwell first took open form, and foreshadowed his speedy ruin. As each at table spoke of the goodwill the king bore Cranmer, Norfolk compared him, hypocritically enough, with Wolsey, saying that

[1] Burnet's Reformation, i. 533.

Cranmer was mild and gentle, whereas the cardinal was stubborn and churlish, and could never bear any nobleman. "And that you know, my Lord Cromwell," added he, "for he was your master." The taunt drew forth a rejoinder from Cromwell, that he knew he had been Wolsey's servant, but that he had never been so much in love with him as to have gone with him to Rome had he been chosen Pope, as he, Norfolk, was to have done. Norfolk denied the truth of the insinuation, but Cromwell repeated it, and told the number of florins he was to have had for being his admiral to take him safely to Italy. "You lie," cried Norfolk, in a fury, with a deep oath; and the quarrel got still hotter, till the archbishop and the others present could only with difficulty pacify the two for the time.[1] But it was the beginning of the end. Cromwell was, henceforth, a doomed man. The Romanists knew that the Reformation could never be effectually stamped out while he was alive, and wearied to have his head. Norfolk was now only too ready to help them.

The bishops lost no time in improving their victory in having got the Six Articles passed. A commission was appointed to act as inquisitors, and presently such crowds were brought before their courts, for having refused holy water, for having kept away from church, and the like, that in a fortnight five hundred were indicted in London alone, and many of these were forthwith thrust into prison. What that meant in those days was to be seen in 1557, eighteen years later, at the Oxford assizes, when the high sheriff and 300 townspeople died of infection caught from the prisoners.[2] Latimer and Shaxton were confined in private houses, and resigned their bishoprics, in the belief that it was the king's will that they should do so, which was not the case, at least as regarded Latimer. But the fury and malignity of the reactionists overshot itself, for Henry, at Cranmer's and Cromwell's intercession, used his new power of

[1] Foxe, v. 398. [2] Haydn's Dictionary of Dates, Art. "Oxford."

issuing authoritative proclamations, to open the prison doors and set all free. It was soon found, moreover, that the full vengeance for which the Romanists had hoped could not be had so long as Cromwell lived.

The effect of the Six Articles on the religious future of England cannot be overrated, for they at once led to the first great religious emigration, and thus brought many who hereafter returned, under ecclesiastical influences very different from those they left behind them. It was through these exiles, and those who followed, in Mary's days, that Puritanism took its first definite shape as a great party in our Church—a Puritanism, however, so mild, that our Evangelical clergy are its lineal representatives now. It might rather be called the Protestant party, as opposed to the sacerdotal, for the struggle between the two was to be an earnest battle for evangelical religion in its simplicity, instead of any imitation of the priestly system of Rome.

The exiles found that the Reformers on the Continent were in even greater commotion than themselves at the legislation that had driven them from England. Even the gentle Melancthon wrote Henry, entreating him to repeal "the barbarous decree." He, Luther, and other Reformers, wrote to the Elector of Saxony, breaking off all thought of union with a Church under such a king. As to Gardiner, they made the most blasting disclosures, which it is well to keep in mind in judging the system of which he was the recognized champion. "While exposing before all this nation his scandalous connections," they wrote, "he dares to assert that it is contrary to the law of God for a minister of God to have a wife. Yet he leads about the country two mistresses in men's clothes."[1] In England men said that the articles had been written, not with Gardiner's ink, but with the blood of a dragon, or rather the claws of the devil.[2]

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[1] Corp. Ref., iii. 796. [2] Foxe, v. 539.

Yet there were gleams of light in the sky. Tunstal, of Durham, wrote to the king as the mouthpiece of the bishops, asking that auricular confession might be enforced through the country, but he was told that he was "a self-willed man," and his demand was rejected. The political bearing of the confessional turned Henry against it. Nor was there any hope of the restoration of the Pope's authority, for one of the amusements given the Londoners this summer, by the king's order, was a sea-fight between two galleys, one bearing the English flag, the other the Papal arms, which ended by Henry's soldiers boarding the Pope's boat, and pitching the effigies of the Pope and of several of his cardinals into the river, amidst the shouts of the people. The Papal image, indeed, was presently pulled on board again, but only to be dragged through the streets and burnt after it had been hanged.[1]

The Bible, also, was as yet left free. Henry looked on it as the best help he had against the Pope. An edition of 2,500 copies had been exhausted within a year, and Cromwell, eager to keep what ground he could, arranged for the printing of a fresh one at Paris, where both the paper and presswork were better than in England. Francis was at the time seeking Henry's favour, and sanctioned the proposal, since the hated volumes would at once be exported from France, when printed. Grafton and Coverdale presently went over to Paris, and laboured hard to get the work done while they could, but they found themselves in constant danger if they ventured into the streets. At last, in December, 1538, the officers of the Inquisition entered the printing-office and ordered the printing to be stopped, and the sheets to be given up to be burned. Providentially, all that had been printed, up to a short time previous, had already been sent off to England, and a bribe to the officer rescued nearly all the rest. But even this would not content Cromwell. Agents sent by him to Paris got possession of the

[1] Le Grand, Divorce, ii. 205.

presses, the types, and even the printers, and took the whole away with them to London, where the printing was completed two months later, the last page bearing the words, "The whole Bible finished in 1539—A Domino factum est istud"—"It is the Lord's doing."

The wisdom of Cranmer's retention of his post was now seen. Letters patent were granted him, allowing private persons to have "the free and liberal use of the Bible in the English tongue," and sanctioning only Tyndale's translation as issued in successive editions by Cromwell.

Other matrimonial schemes having been abortive, both in France and in the circle of the emperor, Henry had fallen back on the proposal to take the daughter of the Duke of Cleves, and thus form a Protestant league which should support him against the counter-alliance of France, Charles, and the Pope, at all times so dangerous. After lengthened negotiations the bride-elect was at last sent for, and brought to Calais with great pomp. Reports had reached England that her charms were rather in her worth than in her beauty, but Holbein, in an evil hour for Cromwell, had been sent over to paint her portrait, and he had done it with more fancy and less realism than his wont, though Cromwell's agents maintained that the resemblance was perfect. The Evangelical party were in high spirits. The Six Articles must needs be neutralized by such an alliance: toleration of Evangelical doctrine must follow the advent of a Protestant queen. Barnes, an extreme man of the party, and by no means its best representative, had been sent over as one of the English commissioners, and he could report that, thanks to Cromwell, persecution was over in England, preaching was free, and religious books, including the Bible, had open sale.

But the vicegerent was playing a dangerous game, for the Romanists ill brooked the suspension of the Six Articles and the consequent escape of their prey, and they were the majority of the Privy Council. Henry warned him to be cautious, but he answered the haughtiness of his enemies by haughtiness in

return, conscious of the greatness of his aims, and filled with a righteous loathing of priestcraft and all that abetted it. The extravagance of the king, the fortification of the coasts, the granting away of abbey lands, and the expenses in Ireland, caused an outlay which swallowed up immense sums, and for this Cromwell was blamed, though he was only the servant of Henry's will in such matters as in all others. It had been so with Wolsey. Slavish obedience had been demanded from him, and yet he had been treated and ruined as if acting freely. Cromwell's own outlay was great though he affected no state. He had agents all over Europe, and his bounty at home fed two hundred poor every day. To meet this he had no regular salary, but had to rely on gifts and pensions for services rendered, as was then the unwholesome practice. This year, 1539, at the dissolution of the great monasteries, Henry had granted him thirty monastic manors and valuable estates, and he had previously obtained the Castle and Lordship of Okeham, and the impropriated[1] revenues of the Deanery of Windsor. Jealousy of such favours to one "low-born;" hatred of him as the patron of "heretics," and for the part he had had to take in the executions of men like the Marquis of Exeter and those who suffered with him, had combined to set a conspiracy afoot to ruin him. Of this, Gardiner, ever smooth, treacherous and crafty, was the soul. Cranmer knew he was plotting Cromwell's destruction, and would have been glad could he have fastened some charge against him for his evidently treasonable relations to Rome, that he might save his friend by getting so bitter an enemy removed; but Gardiner was too wily to be caught, and though constantly at the very edge of the law, took care not to pass openly beyond it.

Anne of Cleves had reached Calais on the 12th December, but the weather prevented her crossing to Deal for a fortnight. At last, two days after Christmas, she landed, and went the same

[1] Impropriate — lit., to appropriate to private use—to make over ecclesiastical property to a layman.

night to Dover, whence, after resting over Sunday, the next day, she set out to Canterbury. Half-way towards the old cathedral city, on Barham Down, she was met by Cranmer and five other bishops, in a wild storm, and passing on reached Rochester on New Year's Eve. Here the king was in waiting, impatient to see her, but she was not the woman to please a man like him; for, though ladylike, she was dark in complexion, plain, and large. He was now forty-nine, and no longer the splendid creature he once had been, for he was getting hugely bloated, and his leg was growing constantly worse, but he was as exacting in female beauty as ever. Without waiting to speak twenty words he left her and rode off from Rochester. Cromwell's doom was fixed, for any ruffle of his pleasures, any fret of his royal mind, was quite enough to efface a life of service, and to make him abandon the highest or best to his enemies.

The destruction of the great abbeys and the sequestration of their lands had gone on ruthlessly. The head monks and nuns indeed were pensioned, some so liberally that they were erelong made bishops to save their annuities, which were always paid, but the rank and file had suffered much. The wealth and splendour of some of the abbeys may be imagined by the picture of Glastonbury left us by the visitors in 1538. It was "a house meet for the king's majesty and no man else—great, goodly, and so princely as we have not seen the like. There are four parks adjoining, the furthermost of them but four miles from the house; a great mere, five miles round, and a mile and a-half from the house, well stocked with great pikes, bream, perch, and roach; four manor houses belonging to the abbot, the furthermost only three miles distant." These princely mansions were dismantled, and remain still a wonder in their ruin; the cattle were sold "for ready money," the lands leased, and the monks dismissed, with "pensions and the king's benevolence and reward."[1] Unfortunately for him, the abbot, a peer of the realm,

[1] Suppression of the Monasteries, 258.

an old man, with an income equal now to £42,000 a year, had let his monks hide away the plate, jewels, &c., and had helped the northern insurgents. Suspicion was thus drawn on him, which ended in his being hanged, shortly before Christmas, with two of the monks, on a hill-top near the baronial splendour over which he had so long reigned. Two other powerful abbots, of Reading and of Colchester, were also hanged about the same time on nearly similar charges. So impartially did Henry strike all parties in his tyranny.

The destruction of such magnificent buildings as Glastonbury, Fountains Abbey, and a host of others, is a lasting cause of regret, especially as it sprang from no misguided but noble religious fervour, but was the act of an absolute king, himself a bigoted Romanist. With power like his he might have turned such wonders of architecture to what worthy uses he pleased, but he preferred to sell the bells for a trifle, to strip the lead from the roofs because he could sell it for cash, and, where he could, to sell even the stones.

But a still deeper regret rises at the thought of the literary destruction such Vandalism brought with it, though the Reformers stand absolutely clear from the blame. It was the Romish bishops who had voted unanimously to give the abbeys unconditionally to the king: the Reformers had lost favour by standing out against such sacrilege.

The abbeys and monasteries had till then been the only libraries in England; and though not a few had been left to moulder in neglect, as was to be expected in a time of such corruption, there were others of the greatest value, like that happily preserved at Durham. But the men sent to break up the old monastic foundations had little interest in such treasures: perhaps underrated them from the prejudice of the times against everything monkish. When men's passions are roused in times of great social revolution, they cannot act calmly. The whole nature is too fiercely excited to leave the judgment free. Nor do we know whether the visitors were not unthinkingly told to

turn all they could find into money. In any case libraries were unfortunately sold, like the lead of the roofs, for what they would bring—"Some," says Bale, "to grocers and soap-sellers, and some they sent over the sea to the book-binders, not in small number, but at times whole ships full. Yea, *the Universities* of this realm are not all clear of this detestable fact. I know a merchant-man that bought the contents of two noble libraries for forty shillings. This stuff he has used instead of gray paper for more than ten years, and he has enough for ten years to come."[1] Would that the entreaties of Cranmer had been heard! for his voice pleaded for moderation, and the preservation of what would help education, when men like Gardiner were silent, except to vote everything to the king, to make away with at his pleasure.

Bonner, "the little fat priest," had wormed his way by blustering professions of extreme Protestantism into the see of Hereford, in 1538, having cheated even Cromwell by the earnestness with which he played his part. What he really was may be judged from his life at Nice, that year, when sent with others on a diplomatic mission to Charles and Francis. Charles would not see him, and he stayed at Villa Franca, two miles from town, in the same house with the members of the embassy, though not admitted to their intimacy. They kept him at a distance, in fact, from disgust at his immorality, for he openly kept a mistress, now he was far enough off from English eyes. He and Gardiner were thus a worthy couple. Meanwhile, Stokesley having died, Bonner,—his vicious life being unsuspected by Cromwell and Cranmer,—was made Bishop of London, a dignity in which he was to play a part that has made his name for ever infamous.

[1] Declaration upon Leland's Journal, 1549.

CHAPTER XX.

THE FALL OF CROMWELL.

ON the 6th January, 1540, Henry, dreading that his sending her back would drive her brother into the hands of Charles and Francis, married Anne of Cleves, sorely against his will. He kept a pleasant face, however, for the German commissioners who had come with her, and treated her with due respect, so that the Reformers were in great hopes that better days were in store for them. Her real worth, it was trusted, would make the union a blessing. The German Reformers even dreamed of a union with the English Church, after all, and once more sent over a protest against the terrible Six Articles. Anxious to keep on good terms for the time with the Protestant princes of the Continent, Henry promised to soften their rigour, being anxious above all "to see the true doctrine of Christ shine in all Churches." What these soft words meant was shown only too soon.

Barnes had been sent to Germany about Anne, and this, doubtless, did him no good in the eyes of the king, as he had been in her favour. The Popish bishops, now in the ascendant, eager to entrap any prominent Reformers, got him, Garret, who had once been in trouble for selling Testaments at Oxford, and latterly had been chaplain to Latimer, and Jerome, rector of Stepney, a popular Evangelical preacher, named for Lent sermons at Paul's Cross. On February 7, the Sunday before, Gardiner

himself preached "a very Popish sermon," there, "much to the discontent of the people, and was ably answered by Dr. Barnes," as a Reformer writes to his friend, "on the following Lord's day, with the most gratifying, and all but universal applause."[1] Gardiner's sermon was a poor enough one. From the text, "Cast thyself down,"[2] he told his audience that "the devil nowadays tempts the world, and bids them cast themselves backwards. There is no forwards in the New Teaching but all backward. Now, the devil teaches, Come back from fasting, come back from praying, come back from confession, come back from weeping for thy sins. All is backward, insomuch that men must now learn to say their Paternoster backward. Of old, heaven was sold at Rome for a little money; now that we have done with all that trumpery, the devil has invented another—he offers us heaven for nothing." Thus did the saint who travelled when abroad with two mistresses in his train, stigmatize evangelical preaching, and cry up the merit of works.

Barnes, always unwise, was rash enough to pun on the bishop's name in his reply, under the figure of a *gardener* who left weeds growing in his master's garden; but it was done openly in his presence, and he asked his forgiveness before he closed, as if conscious that his vehemence had carried him too far. The answer was a complaint to the king, of the insult. Garret and Jerome had further offended, if not by any personalities, yet by preaching the simple truths of the New Testament, and the three were therefore ordered to make a public retractation of this offence against the Six Articles, on the following Sunday, which was Easter. On the 4th of April Barnes read, word for word, the official paper put into his hands, and then once more begged pardon of Gardiner, who again was present. This over, he preached, without offensive words, the same doctrine as before, that we are saved by God's grace, not by our own works. Garret and Jerome did the same, for it was the essence of the

[1] Original Letters, p. 316. [2] Matt. iv. 6.

Gospel, which, as faithful men, they could not but proclaim. The result was, they were sent by Henry to the Tower.[1]

Parliament met eight days after,[2] the first that had been held in England without any abbots or priors in the Upper House. Cromwell had tried to break off Francis from the emperor and join him with Henry and the German Protestant princes, but had failed, and failure, with the king, was crime. Worse than all, Charles, ever dexterous in his diplomacy, had virtually detached these princes from England, by specious promises, and Henry was left, all but in name, alone. Things boded ill for the great minister, for he was, for the moment, unsuccessful.

The spirits of the Romanists were moreover elated by the belief that the emperor and Henry would once more unite, and that the old faith would be once more fully restored, the supremacy of the Pope excepted. The emperor, bitter enemy as he was to the Reformation, was supremely desirous to unite Christendom by some concessions, and Lutheranism was not yet hopelessly schismatic. He dreamed that a Council might be held, at which reconciliation might be attained, and Henry and the English Romanists eagerly joined in the hope. Even this helped to incline the king more than ever to the party of Gardiner and Norfolk, and thus aided in Cromwell's downfall, as the promoter of a policy essentially opposed to his own, at the moment.

Feeling the ground tremble below him, Cromwell, while keeping a brave front, took vigorous measures against his most prominent enemies. He had already tried to catch Gardiner in the meshes of the Supremacy Act, but had failed; he now sent Sampson, Bishop of Chichester, to the Tower for having relieved some "traitorous persons," and Gardiner and Tunstal would likely have followed had he himself lived longer than he did. With Sampson, was arrested one Dr. Wilson, "a fierce Papist." Their special offence had been sending "alms to the

[1] April 4, 1540. [2] April 12, 1540.

Papist Abel," a priest who was loud against the king's supremacy, and had been a pamphleteer for Queen Catherine, long before. The poor creature had been "reduced to the greatest distress from having been long kept in a most filthy prison, and, as the Papists here affirm, almost eaten up by vermin."[1] Such were religious politics under Henry.

Cromwell, in Henry's name, informed Parliament at its opening, in April, that the king was still as resolutely bent "on the prevailing of Christ, the prevailing of the Word of God, the prevailing of the Truth," as ever, but, unfortunately, these fine words meant only that he was determined, sword in hand, to enforce his own opinions on all parties alike. Two days later Cromwell's ruin was brought a step nearer by Henry's heaping additional honours on him, for it was the practice of the royal monster, serpent-like to lick tenderly beforehand the victim he was about to destroy. He had given special marks of favour to Anne Boleyn immediately before handing her over to a trial than which, as Hallam says, "nothing is worse in this detestable reign."[2] Cromwell was already Chancellor of the Exchequer, first Secretary of State, Vicegerent, and Vicar-general of England in spiritual affairs, Lord Privy Seal, a Knight of the Garter, and a Baron of the Realm—he was now created Earl of Essex. He had odious work to do in this Parliament for Henry, and the new title might stimulate him to bear the hatred thus incurred. Besides, when he was given up to his enemies, would it not seem that he had been assuredly a traitor, else why should the king have given one up to whom he had just done such honour? The royal pocket was always empty, however frequently filled, and Cromwell had to fill it. To do so would

[1] Hilles to Bullinger. Orig. Letters, 211. Hilles was a London merchant of high character, an educated man, familiar with the Fathers, and able to correspond in Latin. He had fled to the Continent after the Six Articles, and there won golden opinions from all alike by his genuine worth and noble liberality to the exiles.

[2] Constitutional History, 19.

bring him hatred, but he could be thrown to the lions when the money was secured, to turn off the popular indignation from his master. On April 23rd, he obtained, of course at Henry's direction, the suppression of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, and the confiscation of their estates to the king. On May 3rd, he got for the king from Parliament and Convocation an unparalleled subsidy of a fifth of all the yearly incomes of the bishops and clergy, in addition to the tenths received from them annually. The laity, including all classes from the noble to the peasant, were forced to submit to the oppressive tax of "a tenth of all their yearly income, patrimony, and lands," and from those who had none of these, "a twentieth of their moneys, goods, cattle, fruit, and all kinds of property whatever" was taken. So keen, indeed, was the bidding of the two parties—Cromwell's friends and his enemies—for royal favour that the archbishops and bishops offered this money "of their own accord" in the name of all the clergy, "because the king had delivered them from the yoke and bondage of the Roman Pontiff." "As if," says honest Hilles, "they had ever been, when subject to the Pope, under such a yoke as they are now, when all their property, and life itself, are at the king's disposal." Parliament, emulating the servility of the clergy, also professed to make a voluntary grant of the extortions wrung from them. "But everything," says Hilles, with bitter irony, "is given freely and voluntarily in this country."[1] Had Henry known what was in some letters from London to the Continent, it would have fared ill with the writers.

By the 8th of May, the king had got the money he wanted, and was ready to let Cromwell perish now he had served his own purpose by him. Some ecclesiastical details filled up a day or two, and on the 11th of May Parliament was prorogued till the 25th. The interval was needed to plan the ruin of the great minister. A note sent him by Henry on the 9th of May, within

[1] Hilles to Bullinger. Orig. Letters, 207.

a few hours after the subsidies and taxes, which he had been ordered to obtain, had been secured, afterwards showed him that his death had been settled by the king while he was seemingly more friendly with him than ever. On the 10th of June he was arrested by the Duke of Norfolk, when sitting at the Council Table. One man alone remained faithful to him, and that was Cranmer—the one voice raised at an earlier day in defence, as far as was possible under such a king, of Anne Boleyn. "He was such a servant," said he, "in my judgment, in wisdom, faithfulness, and experience, as no prince in this realm ever had" —"he loved your majesty, as I ever thought, no less than God." A bill to attaint him was read a first time, on the 17th; on the 19th it was read a second and a third time, and sent down to the Commons. Thence it came back on the 29th to the Lords, and was there read three times at one sitting, and once more passed without a dissentient voice. The last step—Henry's assent—was given the same day.[1] The service of twelve years, with unexampled devotion; the splendid ability displayed; the many noble qualities exhibited, were nothing. Out of temper with even such a servant for a moment, the punishment was death! Cromwell was charged with heresy and treason; the first because he favoured the Reformation; the second, in reality, because he had carried out the commands imposed on him by the king. His condemnation unheard, a process he had himself used, likely by Henry's orders, with others, is the strongest presumption of his innocence. He was, doubtless, zealous for an honest evangelical Reformation, and he may have exceeded what were afterwards defined as the limits of official duty in furthering it, but we know neither what evidence was given against him, nor, indeed, if there was any. He was not heard in his own defence, and "the whole judicial proceedings against him may be pronounced altogether void of any shadow of justice."[2]

[1] Lords' Journals. [2] Sir James Mackintosh's England, ii. 227.

The doomed man lay for a month in the Tower under the shadow of death, and Henry even sent him some money to make his confinement more endurable. He also gave his son Gregory, a lad of weak intellect, his father's titles, to shut the father's mouth, for fear of their subsequent withdrawal. Cromwell's real offence, so far as the king was concerned, was generally whispered to be that he did not urge a divorce which Henry now wanted, and Gardiner and the other courtiers zealously supported. Cromwell, on the other hand, "thought it would neither be for the king's honour, nor for the good of the kingdom."[1] Henry's increased zeal for separation from his new wife had, in fact, grown intelligible to the community before Cromwell was struck down, for it was noticed, first by the courtiers, and then publicly, that he had chosen a new object of his attentions—Catherine, daughter of Lord Edmund Howard, and niece to the Duke of Norfolk—"a lady of very diminutive stature,"—with whom he was for the moment much taken. He was seen constantly in the day-time, and occasionally even at midnight, crossing over to her on the Thames in a little boat, and it was noticed that Gardiner very often provided feastings and entertainments for them in his palace, though the citizens at first thought it rather betokened immorality than a divorce.

The passion for a niece of Norfolk, Cromwell's deadly enemy, and the feastings accepted from Gardiner, an enemy of the doomed man even more bitter than the other, with the failure of the designed alliance with the Protestant princes against Charles, involving as it had done the hateful marriage with Anne,—explain the fate of Cromwell. Kept lingering on till the 28th of July, he was then beheaded, with Lord Hungerford, who was accused of having used conjuring to find out how long the king would live.[2] Anything was enough, under such a king, as an excuse for legal murder.

It has been the custom to denounce Cromwell as a worthless

[1] Hilles, Zurich Let., 202. [2] Burnet, i. 580.

adventurer, because the work he had to do involved hardship and evil in the doing. It may have been wrong to have taken office at all under such a man, but, having accepted it, the choice between playing the despot when ordered or himself perishing was before him each moment. No Minister of whatever rank was more than the slave of Henry's imperious all-directing will. Nor dared either Lords or Commons, on peril of death, act freely. The sword hung over every head. To hesitate for a moment in obeying the king's worst commands meant destruction. In such a position it is impossible to judge a man fairly. Where we see him in private, Cromwell was a faithful and true friend: unostentatious, charitable, merciful. Even in his official relations he continually tempered the reigning tyranny with mercy, where possible. In many cases, indeed, he could not, but had to transmit orders, not to try men, but to execute them. But who can say how much he resisted or what pain his ignominious position gave him, as chief slave of the awful master he had to please? One thing is certain, that had he had his way, Southern Germany would have been secured for Protestantism, the Thirty Years' War averted, and England reformed in a far grander sense than it really was. The charge against him of designing and carrying out the despotism of the State over the Church is ridiculous. Henry's notions of his supremacy were incompatible with any theory that made the Church more than a mere department of the State. The broad and generous ecclesiastical theory of Cromwell and Cranmer would ultimately have made the Church essentially as independent as the Presbyterian Churches became in Scotland, for they wished to eradicate the exclusive sacerdotalism which has been the source of all ecclesiastical troubles of modern England, and to unite with the Protestantism of Europe on a common platform of evangelical truth. Neither proposed to alter the Episcopal Church government already established; it would have remained untouched in its least detail, but it would have rested on popular sympathies and its own merits, rather than on exclusive claims.

Gardiner now seemed to have finally triumphed. He had burned three people in London in the spring because they denied transubstantiation, and had not received the sacrament at Easter, and shortly after had sent to the same doom a poor insane creature who had held up a dog in church during the mass.[1] It was charged against this unfortunate, indeed, that he had, besides, as he was passing a crucifix to which the Spanish sailors in the Thames were wont to make processions, aimed an arrow at "the idol" and, striking its foot, had called out to it to defend itself, if it was able.[2]

The Romanists had "driven on" the divorce of Anne "furiously," and had carried it before Cromwell's death, which, apparently, was to be their reward for doing the king such a service. Contrary to all Henry's precedents, he was left under sentence of death for a month while the divorce was as yet incomplete, and executed four days after it was settled. On the 6th July Audley moved an address in the Lords to the king, to take action respecting this new matrimonial extravagance, and to this the Commons, of course, unanimously assented. Henry thereupon gave them permission to lay the matter before Convocation, and next day Gardiner and Tunstal, Cromwell's enemies, harangued both Houses against the marriage: next day they laid the evidence before them, and the same afternoon Cranmer had the bitter mortification of being forced, as ex-officio chairman, to accept the unanimous assent of the bishops and clergy, and to pronounce the divorce they had decreed. But the Romanists were bent on sending him to the block with Cromwell, and the least hesitation would have been fatal. On the 10th Gardiner delivered the judgment in writing to the Lords, and enlarged on the grounds of it. A bill was forthwith brought into the Commons and passed the next day—the royal assent being given on the 24th, the last day of the session. The divorced queen was quite agreeable, and retired on a pension

[1] See page 328, note.] [2] Hilles, Zurich Letters, 200.

from Parliament of £3,000 a year, equal to £36,000 now. There had been no division taken on any subject during the session, so utterly were all, alike, in terror of their lives. The theory that the solemn preambles by which Henry introduced his worst bills were accepted as honest, is a mere invention. Men wrote to their friends that the statements made of the commonalty having had many doubts and perplexities respecting the marriage were "altogether false," since "not a man would have dared to have mentioned them had they existed, which was not the case." As to the king's character, they were equally uncomplimentary.[1] All that was said by Gardiner and others in favour of the divorce was treated as transparently untrue.

No fewer than forty-eight new statutes had been enacted during this session. One moderated the Six Articles in what related to the marriage of priests and their immorality. It had been required that their wives be put away at once, on pain of death, but vice had been treated as unworthy punishment till thrice repeated, and was then followed by hanging. Offenders were now to be fined for the first offence; to lose one benefice, if they had two, for the second; and for the third, to forfeit their property, lose all preferment, and be imprisoned for life. "And yet," says Hilles, "it does not appear to the king at all 'extreme' still to hang those clergymen who marry, or who retain the wives they had married before the previous statute."[2] Another Act appointed a clerical commission to draw up a fresh statement of what "should be believed and obeyed by all the king's subjects," and also of the ceremonies to be observed.

To favour the pretence that the Cleves marriage had been questioned by the people, indemnity was granted to all who had spoken against it, though no one had ever attempted to do so.[3] Pardon, indeed, was in fashion when Henry had got such a

[1] Hilles to Bullinger, Zurich Letters, 206. [2] Ibid., 205.
[3] Ibid., 206.

subsidy as Parliament had granted him, and hence he was pleased to announce a general forgiveness of all heresies, treasons, felonies, &c., committed before the 1st of the then current month of July, with some few exceptions. Among these, however, were Cromwell, Barnes, Garret, and Jerome; the two sons of the Marquis of Exeter;[1] Cardinal Pole's[2] brother, Lord Montague; Sampson, Bishop of Chichester; one Wilson, "a zealous papist;" some priests, and the Countess of Salisbury, whose crime was being a Plantagenet, and the mother of Pole.

The deathsmen had a busy time of it as soon as Parliament rose. Six days after[3] its adjournment, and two days after the execution of Cromwell, the London citizens saw six men drawn on carts to their death—three of them Romish priests, condemned for opposing the king's supremacy—the other three, "preachers of the Gospel, of no mean order," Dr. Barnes, Garret, and Jerome. Arrived at Smithfield, the three former were first hung, then cut down from the gallows while still living, cut open, and their bowels drawn out—then beheaded and quartered, and their limbs fixed over the gates of the city, their heads being stuck up over London Bridge. The three clergymen, who, though guilty of nothing but preaching the Gospel, had made themselves obnoxious to Gardiner by doing so, were, on the other hand, burned alive. Kissing each other at the stake, they "remained in the fire without crying out," says a citizen, "but were as quiet and patient as though they had felt no pain; and thus they commended their spirits to God the Father, by Jesus Christ." If they had preached salvation by faith and a holy life, instead of by penances prescribed by the Romanists, and thus offended the king, they had publicly asked pardon, and they had extolled the royal wisdom,

[1] Exeter was first cousin to Henry.

[2] Pole had never forgiven the murder of his uncle, the Earl of Warwick, by Henry's father, in 1499.

[3] July 30th, 1540.

learning, and mercy, in no measured terms. But the bishops had helped Henry to his divorce, and had given him the subsidy, and it would gratify them to give them three victims to burn at once.[1] It made up in part for his coquetting with the Reformers in the past. Barnes protested at the stake that he did not know why he was burned, for neither he nor his fellow-sufferers had been tried. But men did not care to inquire so much about these things, as they had done formerly, "for it is now," says Hilles, "no novelty among us to see men slain, hung, quartered, or beheaded—some for trifling expressions, explained as spoken against the king, others for the Pope's supremacy; some for one thing, some for another."[2] The blame of the burnings was ascribed wholly to Gardiner.

Amidst all this bloodthirsty confusion, however, the general pardon had one good result—it delivered Latimer and Shaxton from imminent death. Latimer had been kept in the Bishop of Chichester's palace, in detention, but from the time of Sampson's imprisonment in the Tower, he had had more liberty. Always the same fearless, true-hearted man, he alone, of all the prominent Reformers, stood by Dr. Barnes in his troubles. "Many persons," says the martyr, in probably the last letter he ever wrote, "approve my statements, yet no one stands forward except Latimer."[3] But the freedom regained by the pardon of July was not unconditional. "How favourable to them [Latimer and Shaxton] the king now is," writes Hilles to his friend, "and how he appreciates their sound and pure gospel, is evident from this, that he has not only prohibited them from preaching, but also from coming within ten or fifteen miles of our two universities, the City of London, or their own dioceses. O atrocious deed, thus to drive away faithful shepherds from their flocks, and intrude ravenous wolves in their stead! God will not, I hope, endure this tyranny much longer."[4]

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[1] Zurich Letters, 210.
[2] Ibid., page 617.
[3] Ibid., 211. See also Burnet, i. 394.
[4] Original Letters, 215.

Meanwhile the spiritual condition of England was wretched. Popery without the Pope was in full possession of the land, so far as Gardiner could effect it. Every hymn and every prayer was in Latin. The thousand ceremonies of the old ritual obscured the simple Gospel. There is "such a want of sincere ministers of the Word," writes Hilles, "that a man may travel from the east of England to the west, and from the north to the south, without being able to discover a single preacher who, out of a pure heart and faith unfeigned, is seeking the glory of God."

Cranmer's position was now doubly perilous since Cromwell's death, for the Romanists spared no efforts to destroy him that their course might be clear. Every one expected that he would go next. A revision of the Manual known as "The Institution of a Christian Man," published in 1537, had been ordered by the king, and it was hoped that Cranmer might be brought within the grasp of the law by the opinions he would doubtless express in his share in it. Gardiner himself was left out of the commission, Henry declaring that he was a "turbulent, wilful man, and so much addicted to the Popish party, that they could have had no quiet in their consultations if he had joined them."[1] He was not, however, necessarily idle in the matter. As the evil genius of the Reformation, he could not keep from plots against it.

Twenty-seven questions were drawn up by Cranmer, to which he and the other bishops were to write answers, and from his own we learn what his belief really was at this time,[2] and what our Church would have been had he been left free to influence its standards.

Thus in respect to the sacraments he saw no reason to restrict them to seven, since Scripture does not fix their number and the Fathers never limit them to seven. For his part he only found Scriptural warrant for calling Baptism and the Eucharist sacraments. This was a direct invalidation of the five upheld

[1] Strype, i. 174.

[2] Strype, Appendix, vol. i. 174.

by the Old Party,—"Penance, Matrimony, Confirmation, Orders, and Extreme Unction." As to bishops and priests, he still held that they needed no consecration, their election or appointment by the crown or otherwise being sufficient. So utterly did he ignore "Apostolic succession." Laymen, if educated, might lawfully preach and teach where there were no bishops and priests. A man was not bound by Scripture to confess to a priest. The limits of priestly power in excommunication were those of the laws of the land. In all cases he must be in harmony with these. Extreme Unction, he affirmed, is not spoken of in Scripture or in any ancient author. He says nothing against the Real Presence, for he still clung to it, but in almost everything else he and Gardiner's party were at opposite poles. He repudiated sacerdotalism; they held it the essence of Christianity. To have spoken so bravely at such a time, shows a moral courage rare in any age.

The Old Party had drawn up opinions of a very different kind, and pressed Cranmer to accept them, hinting that they expressed the sentiments of the king. Every one yielded except him, but he could not be moved. He did not leave his enemies, however, to accuse him to Henry, but went to him himself, and secured his support, so that Gardiner had the mortification of seeing his plot miscarry. He had counted on Cranmer's being thrown into the Tower, which seemed so likely that many wagers had been made in London about it.[1]

The New Manual, when it appeared, differed little from that published three years before, and, even in its variations, must be regarded as the expression of Henry's opinions rather than of those of the bishops, who could only accept what their supreme head prescribed. Justification by faith as opposed to human merits was again asserted. The definition given of the "Catholic Church" was that "it comprehended all assemblies of men in the whole world that received the faith of Christ," and that they

[1] Strype, i. 172.

became members of it by "a unity of love and brotherly agreement together." Episcopal ordination was declared necessary; baptism was re-stated as in the former book.[1] Penance was made to consist in the absolution of priests, which was now, therefore, held necessary; not merely, as before, desirable. The doctrine of Apostolic succession was upheld; Confirmation was said to have been instituted by the Apostles. Transubstantiation, private masses, and communion in one kind were asserted; Extreme Unction was said to have been an Apostolic command. Images were to be honoured only for the sake of those whom they represented, and therefore the preferring one to another, and making pilgrimages and offerings to them, was condemned. Censing them and kneeling to them were, however, permitted, but the people were to be taught that this was done only to the honour of God. Invocation of saints was allowed. The Lord's Prayer was explained, and it was said that the people ought to pray only in English, to excite their devotion, though Latin alone was used in the services of the Church. Good works were necessary, but not the superstitious inventions of monks and friars; rather works flowing from the love of God in the heart. Prayer for the dead was treated almost in the same way as in the former book.

A new "Primer" was also issued, but it was much like the former one. A few collects and offices were removed from the Missals and Breviaries, but so few that the old books were still used in the churches. A few years before the bishops had resisted the least change; now, thanks to Cranmer's influence with Henry, they had to endure such innovations as must have been abhorrent to them. Yet they had still retained more than they yielded, and hoped in the end to win back all their lost ground, if they could gain over the king. They little knew the revolution in the thoughts of men at large which had been caused by the possibility of any change at all in religion having

[1] See pages 285, 307.

been admitted. The authority of the Church had rested on its absolute trustworthiness as the voice of God to mankind. To confess the necessity of revising even the least of its teachings, was to break for ever the spell it had held over the human mind, and to sanction man's right to question whatever demanded belief. Even already this had become an ineradicable principle in the English people.

The cause of the Reformation was, indeed, assured by the continued freedom of the Scriptures. The bishops had never finished their translation, yet edition after edition of Tyndale's version had been published, and this year, 1540, amidst several different issues, came one so noble that it was known as the large Bible. It, also, was Cromwell's gift from his bloody grave to the nation, for it was printed from the types and presses he had rescued, the year before, from the Inquisition in Paris. "Gardiner and his fellows did mightily stomach and malign the printing thereof,"[1] but Henry was in its favour. Many parish priests had neglected to get a copy of the former editions, for fear the people might be made heretics, but a new order was issued requiring them under a fine to have one put in every church before All Saints' day, 1541. The people were, however, to read it "humbly, meekly, reverently, and obediently, not with high and loud voices, in time of the celebration of mass and other divine services in the church." Nor were they to take upon them "any common disputation, argument, or exposition of the mysteries therein contained, but for their personal instruction, edification, and amendment of life." Even Bonner, now Bishop of London, had to set up six Bibles in St. Paul's, though he had already since Cromwell's death dropped the mask, and come out as a zealous Romanist. But he had at least the pleasure of having filled the prisons with "Gospellers," and of having burned a poor boy of fifteen at Smithfield, for having said something against the Real Presence. Three

[1] Strype, i. 191.

besides were in these months burned at Salisbury, and two at Lincoln in one day; and the prisons in many places were once more tenanted by unhappy Protestants.

On the same day, and it may be at the same hour, as Cromwell's head fell on Tower Hill—on July 28th—Henry married his fifth wife, Catherine Howard, four days after his divorce from Anne of Cleves. He had married Jane Seymour within a few hours after Anne Boleyn's execution, and it was not to be expected that the death of Cromwell would secure even as much respect. It did not even give him a second thought. He had simply thrown his great minister to the lions, to turn off from himself to his instrument the unpopularity of acts in which Cromwell had had no choice but to obey.

CHAPTER XXI.

ENGLAND IN THE YEARS 1542-3.

THE later years of Henry's reign have little to record respecting the Reformation. The master spirit was gone, and things drifted on very much as he left them till Henry died. Politics, indeed, had perhaps a part in this state of things, for matters grew stormy abroad very soon after Cromwell's death. Francis threatened a renewal of war with the emperor, and kept England uneasy in the north by his close alliance with James V. of Scotland, son of Henry's sister: a Scotch war soon followed, and before long another broke out also with France.

Meanwhile, the Romanists had a queen of the old faith, and expected a final triumph. Even Henry became devout in the Romish sense, in honour of her, celebrating all the saints' days, and receiving communion constantly. Francis, in utter madness of crime, but strange to say with the connivance of the Pope, proposed to call in the Turk as an ally against the emperor; and Henry, caring nothing for the German Protestants now, abandoned them, to join Charles once more. Cranmer had established professors of Hebrew and Greek in all the cathedrals, to secure a learned ministry, but Gardiner and his party managed to break up the arrangement. The superstitious practices of the past were everywhere enforced: creeping to the cross on Good Friday; carrying blessed palm-branches on

Palm Sunday; carrying candles at Candlemas,[1] and many others; and penalties for their neglect were exacted. Everywhere there was a reaction, and the true spirit of the Old Party showed itself. Bonner, especially, rioted in his new power, for he had come out in his true colours the moment Cromwell fell. His first achievement had been the burning of the poor boy Makins.[2] Presently, 202 persons were prosecuted in thirty-nine London parishes for offences which mark the times. They were such as not coming to confession; not carrying a palm on Palm Sunday; eating flesh in Lent; not praying to saints; burying persons without funeral masses; eager reasoning on the New Doctrine; not creeping to the cross on Good Friday; entertaining Barnes, Garret, Jerome, and Latimer; reasoning against the Sacrament of the Altar, or saying that it was a good thing, but not very God; with others similar.

But the fierceness of the bishops defeated its own ends. All the prisons in London could not hold the accused, and they had to be confined in any building that could be got. It was impossible to proceed against so many, and Henry, in the end, discharged them all.

Yet others were not so fortunate. One Protestant priest had to bear a faggot for saying in a sermon, "If you ask me when we will leave preaching only Christ, I would say, when they leave preaching that works have merit, and when they suffer Christ to be a whole satisfier and means to our justification."[3] Dr. Crome, a prominent Reformer, was commanded to preach that the mass was profitable for both the dead and the living. He read the king's order on the appointed day, after preaching

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[1] Candlemas was established by the Emperor Justinian in 542 to entreat the help of Mary in the disastrous circumstances of the times. It was celebrated on Feb. 2nd, the fortieth day after Christmas, and thus marked the close of the Virgin's Purification. Simeon on that day spoke of Christ as a light to lighten the heathen, and hence consecrated candles were carried, lighted, in church processions, in vast numbers, on it.

[2] Page 359. [3] Foxe, v. 449.

the Gospel as before, in its simplicity, and was forthwith silenced.

One case in which Bonner figures was doubtless a sample of many. A fine tall young man, noted for his good voice, had been put forward by the people to read aloud to them from one of the Bibles chained in St. Paul's. His doing so was strictly within the law, but Bonner committed him to Newgate; when there he was chained to the wall by the neck, the arms, and the legs, and finally thrown into a foul dungeon and loaded with irons, so that he died eight days after.[1]

May witnessed another of the hideous legal murders so peculiar to this reign, that of the aged Countess of Salisbury, apparently for no crime but being the mother of the Poles. In August, Henry set out for the north to meet James V., his nephew, but the Scotch bishops prevented the interview, fearing that their king would be tainted with the new English ideas. But their caution was of little avail, for many of the Scotch who came in contact with the king's escort, eagerly adopted their ecclesiastical notions, and the entrance of the Reformation into Scotland was thus promoted. Hitherto his new marriage had so delighted Henry, that on his return to London he made a public thanksgiving at St. Paul's, for God having given him so admirable a wife. But his happiness was soon to be overclouded. Cranmer had been told of her having been guilty of immorality, at least before her marriage, and as concealment of such a thing would have been treason, he necessarily communicated it to the king. Unfortunately, it was only too true, as the unhappy queen herself confessed, though she strenuously denied any misconduct since her marriage to Henry. Always ferocious, Henry's fury at finding himself involved in another matrimonial scandal knew no bounds. Not only the guilty men, but the relatives and servants of the queen were arrested, to the number of thirteen. On the 10th December, one of the offenders who had confessed

[1] Foxe, v. 451.

his guilt, Culpepper, a kinsman of the queen's mother, was beheaded at Tyburn, and an official of the Duke of Norfolk's house, one Derham, was hanged, drawn — that is, disembowelled—and then beheaded and quartered.[1]

Parliament was convened on the 16th January, 1542, to take on itself the odium of condemning the queen, for, since Wolsey's fall, the former system of dispensing with parliaments had been exchanged for that of doing everything through them. Matters which had never before been submitted to the Houses, were nowadays left to their action. It was by an act of Parliament that England had been separated from the Pope. Parliament had broken the power of Convocation and made the Church wholly dependent on the State; it had defined the creed to be accepted by all; it had confiscated nearly a third of the land of England to the crown, in despoiling the abbeys, &c.; it had fixed the succession to the throne; decided the validity of the king's marriages and the legitimacy of his children, and it had to attaint all who offended him, whether ministers, nobles, or queens. It had, in fact, become so utterly servile, that it might be safely trusted to follow Henry's will with a degrading docility. Its members did obeisance, on entering, to the empty throne; they bowed low each time the king's name was mentioned in the proceedings. But it was kept up because a varnish of legality was given, by making use of it, to the worst acts of tyranny, and the blame of them diverted from the crown.

In his opening speech, Chancellor Audley declared with the flattery becoming an Oriental despotism, that God had anointed Henry with the oil of gladness above his fellows, but he had presently to announce the queen's offence, which was sad enough. Both Houses were afraid to move in the matter till formal indemnity had been granted them for what might be said or done. On the 11th February, the bill of attainder was passed, condemning the queen and Lady Rochford, widow of Anne

[1] State Papers, i. 707.

Boleyn's brother, who had been beheaded mainly through her perjuries. The Duchess of Norfolk, the queen's grandmother; the Countess of Bridgewater, her daughter; Lord William Howard, and his wife—all Norfolks—were also condemned for misprision of treason, and the next day the unhappy queen and Lady Rochford were beheaded.

Not contented with such sweeping attainders, Parliament went to the almost incredible length of making it law that any one whom the king might marry would be guilty of treason, should she not disclose beforehand any previous offence. No wonder that Henry found no more candidates for his hand among the the young, and that he had next to take a widow.

Spoliation and destruction were still active amidst all these domestic troubles. On his journey to the north, Henry had noticed that some shrines of saints had escaped the general destruction he had commanded, and now issued a proclamation ordering their utter removal. Not a stone was to be left to tell where they had been. Parliament also passed an act repealing all statutes of hospitals, colleges, and other similar foundations, to make their surrender to the king more easy.[1]

Things were, indeed, even yet, far from settled, and it was easy to see that civil war was only hindered from breaking out, between the Old and the New Faiths, as it did afterwards in France and Germany, by the vigorous action of the king. Shortly after the execution of the Countess of Salisbury, Henry had himself to set out for the northern counties, with a thousand men and a great number of tents, in the French fashion, to put down another outbreak, under Sir John Neville, supported by a number of the ex-monks; but the rising was quickly suppressed, and the leaders hung, drawn, and quartered, as usual, in June, at London and York.[2]

Such frequent insurrections, with the prevalence of violent crime and lawlessness of all kinds from the roving bands of

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[1] October 4th, 1541.

[2] Zurich Letters, 220.

homeless peasants, discharged soldiers, and expelled monks; the ferocity of the laws passed to repress them, and the multitude of executions, were fast lowering the character of England. The gross immorality of Henry's court, as revealed by the story of the last queen, deepened the shadow. The state of things in all ranks was evidently as bad as it could be. The judicial murder of a grey-haired matron like the Countess of Salisbury showed a monstrous wickedness even on the throne, which was copied only too closely by those beneath. Shortly before the execution of Culpepper, a chamberlain of the king, for his guilty relations to the queen, Henry had pardoned him for the murder of a park-keeper who tried to protect his wife against his violence and that of his attendants. Lord Dacres had been hanged in June for the murder of a poor man for preventing his trespassing on a deer forest. The queen had beyond question lived a shameless life before marriage, and the Duke of Norfolk's household had been compromised by her immorality. Bourchier, Earl of Essex, killed by a fall from his horse in 1539, had been "a most cruel tyrant." Bonner and Gardiner were men of impure lives. Gardiner himself was the illegitimate son of a bishop. Bonner was illegitimate for two generations back. A set of new men, the Russells, the Cavendishes, the Wriothesleys, and others, were rising to immense wealth by obtaining Church estates. So recklessly prodigal indeed had been the grants of monasteries and abbey lands to the courtiers, that something like a fifth of the actual land in the kingdom was in this way transferred from the Church to nobles and gentry. The unspeakable corruption of the Church had, in fact, reacted on the nation, and had reproduced itself in all classes of society. No wonder that there is much to regret in the transition from such a past to the better days of the new era. The moral chaos amidst which the Reformation had to create order and beauty yielded only slowly, and often seemed for a time to regain its sway.

Yet the selfish and unmeasured corruption in high places was destined to be overruled by God for the ultimate growth of

English liberty, civil and religious. A new nobility was being created by the squandered wealth of the Church, which, hereafter, would overpower the despotism of the crown, now left, for the time, without a counterpoise. For the old nobility had been well-nigh swept away by war or the headsman's axe. In the next reigns it was by the interested support of the men who had received the largest shares of Church land that Protestantism—which means spiritual freedom—was enabled to establish itself firmly in England.

The struggle of the two parties in Convocation was still as bitter as ever. Cranmer managed to get a book of Homilies printed to help preachers, and issued an order that all preachers must have licenses; some, meanwhile, being given for the whole country, to those who were most worthy. Preaching had fallen into disuse under the unreformed Church, there being very little except in Lent, when the friars favoured the people with their glorification of saints, relics, and images, illustrated by monstrous legends. The Reformed preachers, on the contrary, used the pulpit assiduously, and, by pointing to Christ as the only Saviour and the necessity of a holy life, created an enthusiasm like that which the friars themselves had awakened in their early days, while as yet poor and evangelical. But the pulpit was not the only agency turned against the old system. Sacred plays and interludes in the churches had for centuries been in vogue with the friars, and these were now often reproduced and turned into satires on prevalent ecclesiastical corruptions, to the infinite annoyance of the Romanists, who very reasonably had such attacks on them prohibited.

The free circulation of the Bible was a sore offence to Gardiner and his party, but, as they could not stop it directly, they were forced to use stratagem. Although a new edition had been published the year before, by authority, bearing the names of Tunstal and Heath, they clamoured for a fresh one. But a proposal to apportion the work anew among the bishops was felt to be only a pretext for fresh delay. The fall of Catherine

Howard had, in fact, made it more needful than ever to resist any reformation, and for this end the suppression of the Bible was eagerly desired, especially by Gardiner. Feeling that he could not bring back the Vulgate at once, he proposed to retain as much of it as he could in the new translation, to make the sense unintelligible to the people, and thus disgust them with it altogether. A hundred and two Latin words, he advised, should be retained "for the sake of their native meaning and their dignity." Among these were ecclesia, pœnitentia, pontifex, holocaustum, simulacrum, episcopus, confessio, hostia, and others. Some words identified with the old Romish dogmas were to be retained because they were so, or, as Fuller pithily says of the word penance—"because it brought much gain to the priests"—"they were desirous to keep it because it kept them." To their consternation, Henry would no longer be mocked, but sent word that the translation was to be left to the universities. In vain they protested that the learning of the land was mainly in Convocation; that the universities had decayed greatly of late, and had only young men. They had to submit.

Affairs had become strained between England and Scotland since James's failure to meet Henry at York, and at last led to a collision at Solway Moss, in which the Scotch were utterly defeated. The Romish clergy of Scotland clung to the French alliance, in hopes of keeping out the religious innovations of England, and even lent James money for the war, but he died of a broken heart not long after his defeat, leaving a daughter —the future ill-starred queen Mary—only seven days old, as his successor. Henry, eager to secure his northern frontier for the future, forthwith proposed that this infant should, hereafter, be married to his son Edward, and dismissed his prisoners on their promising that they would promote the scheme. But whatever they did in that way, they proved of untold influence for good in another. In Henry's camp they had become largely influenced by reforming ideas, and their return was the first great

impulse towards Reformation in Scotland. Cranmer, also, had a hand in this good work, by entertaining some of the leading Scotch, who went back ardent for the New Doctrine.

The loss Henry had suffered by the death of Cromwell made itself constantly more apparent, and of this Cranmer had the benefit in his efforts for the truth. But he had at the best a most difficult task. Parliament and Convocation were again summoned for January, 1543, for war was breaking out with France, Henry and the emperor acting in alliance. Once more, enormous subsidies were demanded and granted. Goods were taxed from 4d. to 2s. on the pound sterling: land from 8d. to 3s. on the same value, foreigners paying double these rates. It was still worse with the clergy, for they had to pay 6s. in the pound in three years. The cost of the Scotch war and of the approaching French one were the plausible reasons. In return for this bounty the Reformation was to receive another blow.

The opposition to the circulation and reading of the Bible had been continued so bitterly, and the results on the people of the liberty enjoyed had been painted in such a light, that Henry at last yielded Gardiner a qualified triumph. An Act was permitted to be passed suppressing the Bibles bearing Tyndale's name; but as they continued to be issued under the names of others, including even Tunstal and Heath, the mischief was more apparent than real. All notes and prefaces were to be obliterated in every copy of other editions—the clergy complaining bitterly of them as Lutheran. Henceforth, no one was to read the Scripture to others, either in any church, or elsewhere, without license. But private reading was permitted to some classes. Noblemen and gentlemen might read it to their families, in their houses, gardens, or orchards: merchants might read it alone and privately, and women, if of noble or gentle blood, had the same limited privilege. Apprentices, working people, and indeed the whole mass of the nation, were strictly prohibited from opening or hearing it under pain, first of imprisonment, and next of whipping. These miserable

restrictions remained in force till Henry's death. Priestcraft had succeeded in once more putting itself in the place of God's Word.

The images of the saints were still decked out in the churches, like those of the Virgin Mary on the Continent, in all the show of silk and gilding, illuminated by wax tapers, so dear to the Romanizers of the present day. This, Cranmer managed to prohibit, though the prohibition was only too generally overlooked. An attempt to reform the ritual and purge the service-book of some of its worthless legends, and especially of the name of the Pope, was keenly resisted, and led to insignificant results, but in one direction the lonely apostle of a spiritual faith was able to effect a momentous advance. Hitherto, as the preface to our Book of Common Prayer tells us, "when any book of the Bible was begun" to be read in the public service, "after three or four chapters were read out, all the rest were unread. And in this sort the book of Isaiah was begun in Advent, and the book of Genesis in Septuagesima; but they were only begun, and never read through: after like sort were other books of Scripture used." It was now ordered, thanks to Cranmer, that two chapters of the Bible should be read in English by the minister during each service, in regular succession, till the whole of the book was finished. Henry had a clear sense of the necessity of the Scriptures being kept before the people, to prevent their going back wholly to Rome, and his will gave Cranmer's wishes force, in spite of the Old Party.

They were able, however, to resist any serious reforms in the ritual, and it went on, to quote again from the preface to the Book of Common Prayer, with a mosaic of "uncertain stories and legends, with multitudes of responds, verses, vain repetitions, commemorations, and synodals." Everything was "read in Latin to the people," which they did not understand. Only "a few of the Psalms were daily said, and the rest utterly omitted. Moreover, the number and hardness of the rules called the Pie, and the manifold changings of the service, was the cause, that

to turn the book only, was so hard and intricate a matter, that many times there was more business to find out what should be read, than to read it when it was found out."[1]

There was much, on every hand, to do. The richer clergy and colleges had an evil name for idleness, neglect of study, and indulgence at table. In his zeal and simplicity Cranmer fancied an archiepiscopal order might work a cure. But it was vain to prescribe what fare must content a bishop, as indeed it might prove even now. The new edition of the Bishops' Book, known henceforth as the king's, appeared in 1543, and showed the reaction which had marred so much else. The original book had been Romish enough, but this eliminated much of the good it had contained, as, for instance, in regard to the doctrine of the Eucharist, which was now carefully defined in strictly Romish phrases. The change reflected the varying humour of the king, for nothing was passed by Convocation that was not the expression of his opinions. Gardiner's influence had done its work in him, and was duly stamped on this last official manifesto of the creed authorized in his reign.

In this, as in much else, the baleful influence of the crown, under the Tudor despotism, on the development of religious freedom was only too manifest. Rome continued to the end to be Henry's ideal, the supremacy of the Pope excepted. Nor did the feeling end with him. It was equally strong even in Elizabeth, though circumstances forced her to make some concessions to the spirit of the nation. Except Edward, all the Tudors had an open or secret liking for Rome as the type of absolute authority, and as such the natural counterpart of their conceptions of the royal prerogative. Its spiritual tyranny lent colour and support to their political despotism, and was instinctively and tenaciously cherished as far as possible, alike from its suiting their taste and from the impulse of self-preservation. Even the Stuarts, in their feeble aping of the Tudors, recognized

[1] Preface to the Book of Common Prayer.

the same principle, and felt that despotic claims on the part of the Church were alone in harmony with their theory of divine right in the crown. Hence the English Reformation was strangled at the outset by the throne and the Old Party, as in France it was stamped out by the throne and the Vatican. Left free, England would have cast off sacerdotalism and become evangelical, for in no other European country had the religious opposition set in so early or with such strength against priestly claims. A wide demand for thorough reform had already sprung up in the days of Wycliffe, and had leavened the intelligent town populations before Henry's quarrel with Rome. There was no desire to exchange the episcopal government established for a more democratic, for Genevan Presbyterianism was as yet unborn. But there was an intense dissatisfaction with the ghostly claims of the bishops and priests, as the source of the main doctrinal corruptions abounding, and a yearning for a simple New Testament creed; and these, but for the Tudors, would have left less to reform in our Church, than its best friends, in presence of open Romanism so insolent to-day in its pulpits and altars, have to regret.

The odious Six Articles were assailed again this year by Cranmer, and in spite of the opposition of Gardiner, the death penalty was abolished except for ecclesiastics; even they suffering, henceforth, only for the third offence, while the laity, even in a third offence, were only to forfeit their property and suffer imprisonment. Charges, moreover, must be made within a year of the alleged act, and witnesses were to be heard for the accused. It was enacted, however, that the king might alter this, in any way, if he chose.

The records of Canterbury show us Cranmer, in the passing months of 1543, upholding the new "King's Book" in his diocese, and allowing no preaching or arguing upon it. He did not entirely approve of it, but the royal command was law, and there was, besides, much that was good in the book; though he afterwards charged Gardiner plainly, in King

Edward's time, with having "seduced the king" to let him foist matter into it which would not otherwise have been admitted.[1] He had a weary time of it in these days, what with the jangling of preachers of opposite views; the accusation and counter-accusation by neighbours for angry words on disputed doctrines; the ignorance and superstition of some, and the unbalanced zeal of others. One village priest had set up again four images, which had been taken down by the king's command, for abuses by pilgrimages and offerings: another had said that if Judas had gone to God and confessed his fault, as he went to the priest, he would not have been lost. The Vicar of Boughton had not preached against the Bishop of Rome or set forth the king's supremacy; nor had he even preached at all, once a quarter, as required. The Vicar of Northgate had not read the Bible in service-time, as required, nor declared to his parishioners the right use of holy water, holy bread, bearing of candles on Candlemas Day, giving ashes, bearing palms, or creeping to the cross. No wonder, therefore, his flock "ran to the church for holy water, to cast about their houses every thunder-storm, and, at other times, to drive away devils." One man had confessed briefly enough to his curate, "I am a sinner," and preferred telling the rest to God. John Tofts had openly read the Bible in the church to his wife and a group of neighbours. The bellringer of Christ Church had poured the hot coals out of the censer on the new grave of the archbishop's chaplain, "as though he had been a heretic worthy burning." One preacher had said that "Moses sent letters from hell to teach the state thereof, and how men should live, and more likewise, out of heaven." Another, on Assumption Day, said that as the moon is in full at fourteen days, so Mary conceived Christ when she was fourteen years old. The Virgin's milk," he added, "came down from heaven." "Prayer was not acceptable with God but in the church only." "You fellows of

[1] Strype's Cranmer, i. 228.

the new trick," he went on, "that go up and down with your Testament in your hands, I pray you, what profit take you by it?" Still worse: on Good Friday he preached in Kennington Church that, "as a man was creeping to a cross on a Good Friday, the image loosed itself off the cross, and met the man before he came to the cross, and kissed him."

But while the Romanists thus aired their notions, the Gospellers were not silent. Scory, a preacher, was charged with saying that no one should pray in Latin if he did not understand what he was saying, and that priests and clerks are wrong in taking money for saying Dirige and Mass. He was a Puritan, in fact, in advance. The dedication of *material* churches, he held, was invented for the profit of the bishops, and that if churches were consecrated, then houses should be so, as well. The "sumptuous adorning of churches" he regarded "as against the old fashion of the primitive Church. The money thus spent had better be given to the poor." Ridley, "the prebendary," had called the old ceremonies "beggarly ceremonies." Parson Brooks thought all masters and mistresses should eat eggs, butter, and cheese, in Lent, for an example to their households. The Vicar of Lime said that the water in the font was no better than other water, and that people should not say that they would receive their Maker at Easter, but our housel."[1] Clearly, the Old Party, with their legends and superstitions, were far behind the New Doctrine, for the solidity, truth, and sense of their discourses. Canterbury had three preachers of the Old Party and three of the Gospellers, set there by the king to balance each other; a step by no means conducive to peace. Nor was the quiet remark of Cranmer to a Romanist priest brought before him likely to remain unrepeated —"that *imago*, an image, and *idolum*, an idol, were the same thing, but the one was the Latin, the other the Greek."

As it was in the provinces, so, still more, in London. Richard

[1] The Eucharist.

Hilles, the London merchant, has left a few lines of his story by which, as through a chink into these long dead ages, we see them for a few moments once more living before us.

His neighbours in London, he tells us, spoke grievously of him because from the death of Queen Anne (Boleyn)—he being then a young man—he refused to give a small piece of money for placing large wax candles in the church before the crucifix and the sepulchre. They at first acted kindly with him, through his parents and friends, urging the antiquity of the custom, but he answered that no custom could prevail in opposition to Christ, who said, "God is a Spirit," &c. Finding they could make nothing of him, they had to let things rest for a time, Stokesley, the bishop, telling them that it would by-and-by turn out as they wished. "The year but one before I left England the public orders of the king were sent to the bishops and the principal laity in every parish, that by reason of the superstition of the common people wax candles were not to be burned or placed before images in the churches, except only before the crucifix, and at the festival of Easter, before the sepulchre. The churchwardens immediately sent for me and asked if I still continued obstinate against his majesty's injunctions. I replied that these orders did not concern me . . . 'they do not enjoin me to maintain your lights, but only not to remove them from the church, which I do not attempt to do.' . . . After this I heard no more of the affair"—his mother having secretly paid for him, to keep things quiet—"except that the day after I left London for Antwerp, Winchester [Gardiner] being about to examine some of my neighbours who were apprehended before my departure, endeavoured to fish out of them something about me. He said to one of them, in the presence of them all, as they were standing in his palace—'And you, you foolish man, for what purpose did you daily receive so many persons into your house, seeing you are a poor and needy mechanic?' The man replied, 'There was no such assembly of persons at my house, especially of suspected ones.' 'What,' said the bishop, 'was not

Richard Hilles every day at your house, teaching you and others like you?' The accused denied this altogether, and my most bitter enemies, who were men of wealth, were unwilling openly to inform against me of their own accord, and be regarded in the sight of all as guilty of treachery against their neighbours. The bishop, too, made open inquiry respecting me, and said that I should take myself off, and no longer continue to poison his flock." With this, the momentary light into the long-dead past fails us, and Gardiner and Hilles alike, and the Gospellers trembling in the palace-hall, are once more shadows.

CHAPTER XXII.

CLOSE OF HENRY'S REIGN.

HENRY remained a widower till the summer of the year after Queen Catherine Howard had been beheaded,[1] when he married his sixth wife[2]—Katherine Parr, the widow of Lord Latimer, a lady past the bloom of youth, but "endued with singular beauty, favour, and comely personage;" sensible, pure, and kindly, though hardly astute enough for the crafty and vicious court in which she had to move. Henry, now fifty-two, was steadily declining in health, and increasing in fretful irritability, which made it more dangerous than ever to be about him. To the great joy of the Reformers, and the corresponding chagrin of the Romanists, there was once more a Protestant queen. But even she was not able to prevent them wreaking their vengeance on some more unfortunate Gospellers. A priest; a chorister of Windsor church, famous for his voice; and a Windsor man, who was also churchwarden, had been arrested with eleven others by Dr. London, formerly a zealous Visitor in the suppression of the monasteries, but now in the service of Gardiner—a man, as it proved, of no principle. His victims belonged to a society of "Gospellers" which had been formed at Oxford, and were apprehended on a commission moved for in Council by Gardiner, for searching all suspected

[1] July 15th, 1542. [2] July 10th, 1543.

houses for books written against the Six Articles. Pierson, the priest, had offended by preaching the simple Gospel with so much power that the people flocked from all parts to hear him: the poor chorister had ventured to read the Bible, contrary to the late injunction, and had exhorted his acquaintances not to bow down before dumb images, but to worship only the living God; and the churchwarden had criticised the Romish preaching of some of the priests. For this Gardiner had the happiness of burning them.

A fourth prisoner fared better. Though a poor illiterate man, he had begun the first English Concordance of the Bible, and had brought it to the letter L. Hardly believing that he could have done it, Gardiner shut him up with a Latin Concordance and an English Bible, but he showed that the work was his own by an ingeniousness and diligence that astonished even his persecutors. Gardiner did his utmost to get him burned, but failed. "He is better employed than those who examined him," said Henry, when he heard of it,—and set him free, as he did also the ten others. He was getting tired of the bloodthirstiness of the Old Party, and Cranmer's gentleness was regaining its influence over him.

But however pleasant it might be to burn obscure offenders, it was necessary "to fly at higher game" if Romanism was to prosper. If possible, Cranmer must be destroyed. To Gardiner and his allies "he was the chief supporter of heresy," and "it was wrong to punish humble offenders, and let him go free." The Six Articles seemed to give a means, and Dr. London was ready to be the agent in the plot. No stone was left unturned to secure its triumph. Going down to Canterbury with other spies, London sought by intrigue, by threats, or by cajoling, to get up charges against the primate. Other Reformers among the nobility at court were also sought to be compromised, and it was even hoped that the new queen might be entangled. Informations were taken, and everything seemed ready for the springing of the mine. Unfortunately for London, and

Simonds, an attorney, who had drawn up the accusations, a great packet, which disclosed their whole project, was intercepted, and they were presently sent for and examined about it. Not knowing that their letters had been discovered, they roundly denied the whole affair, on oath, and were sorely confounded when their own writing was produced. Their conviction for perjury followed, and as a punishment they were set on a pillory, and made to ride through the streets with their faces to the tails of the horses, and papers stating their offence stuck on their breasts. London showed some virtue, however, after all, for the shame and mortification so affected him that he died soon after.

Meanwhile, a long string of charges against Cranmer and his chaplains had been handed to the king by Gardiner, who had at last received permission to present them; but the result was very different from his expectations. Taking his barge, Henry crossed over to Lambeth to the primate, and handed him the paper of charges, which he forthwith read. Having finished, he begged the king to name a commission to examine the matter, and frankly explained the facts. Touched by his simplicity and candour, Henry disclosed the conspiracy against him, and promised to nominate a commission, of which, much against his will, Cranmer was to be made the chief member. Inquiry showed that some to whom the primate had rendered special services were among those plotting his death, but he refused to expose and ruin them; and the result of the whole was that his gentleness and humility won the admiration of all. He had shown himself, they said, a true bishop by practising the virtues he recommended to others.[1] Gardiner never recovered the influence lost through this attempt to destroy his rival.

Parliament was convened on the 14th January, 1544, to hear the king's determination to go to war with France once more, and also to be revenged on the Scotch for having annulled the

[1] Cranmer, Works ii. 9. Burnet, Ref. i. 593.

marriage treaty of the infant Mary with Prince Edward. The jests of Francis, even more than political reasons, had led to a quarrel at once costly and useless. A Bill was brought in settling the succession anew. Prince Edward was of course to succeed, but after him, if he had no children, those of Katherine Parr, if she had any, were to follow: next, Mary, and then Elizabeth. As Henry had spent more than all the money he had received, an Act was passed which once more marks the moral worthlessness of the age. He was formally released from all payment of moneys borrowed from private persons under the great seal, and was to be refunded where he had paid back any portion! The late conspiracies against the Primate and others having roused Henry against the Romanists, Cranmer was at last enabled to get the Six Articles still further tempered. It was now enacted that the oaths of twelve men, before three royal commissioners, should be necessary for an indictment under them. None were to be imprisoned but by the king, except on indictment. Charges, moreover, must be made within a year of the alleged offence, and if the words of a sermon were challenged, they must be so within forty days of its being preached. The accused were, besides, allowed to challenge the jury as in other felonies.

Cranmer's energy and splendid tenacity was seen also in a royal mandate published soon after Parliament was prorogued —enjoining that prayers IN ENGLISH should be used henceforth in divine service. Hitherto, it was said, "the people had understood no part of such prayers or suffrages as were used to be said or sung," and had consequently greatly neglected attendance. Now, however, "certain godly prayers and suffrages were set forth in our native English tongue." Thus quietly rose into being the first step of that great revolution embodied in our Book of Common Prayer, which has for so many generations, in conjunction with the English Bible, been the safeguard of Protestantism among us. The new prayers included large extracts from the Psalms, and a paraphrase on the Lord's

Prayer. But the special characteristic was an English Litany, in many respects the same as the grand Litany we use now, though it contained, besides, invocations to the Virgin, to angels, prophets, apostles and martyrs. The King's Primer had already furnished English prayers for private use, but Latin had still been the language of the Church. From this time, however, the people, instead of listening to unintelligible words sung by priests at the altar, or at the head of processions, joined intelligently in public worship, and as they raised their voices in such touching petitions as "Spare us, good Lord;" "Good Lord, we beseech thee to hear us," the religious revolution which had granted them so great a boon became dear for ever to the nation. No change of government could henceforth win or force England to be disloyal to it. Even the storm of Queen Mary's day swept over the land without permanent harm, resting as the new faith did on the instinctive sympathy of all classes.

A second plot against Cranmer failed no less ignominiously than the first. The Old Party, furious at his restored influence, now ventured to accuse him in Parliament of heresy as to the mass, in his sermons and lectures at Sandwich and Canterbury. Their speaker was one Gostwick, member for Bedfordshire, but Henry's quick wit instantly saw that he was only a tool of Gardiner, since he had not himself heard the primate preach any of the discourses impugned. For once, despotism was of service to truth and justice. The king denounced the accuser as a varlet, and told him "that he had played a villainous part to abuse in open Parliament the primate of the realm, especially being in favour with the prince as he was." "What will they do with him," added he, "if I were gone?" "Go and tell the varlet," he continued, addressing one of his privy chamber, "that if he do not acknowledge his fault unto my lord of Canterbury, and so reconcile himself towards him that he may become his good lord, I will pull the gosling's feathers, and soon make him a poor Gostwick, and otherwise punish him, to the example of

others." Hurrying to Lambeth, the unfortunate man found willing forgiveness from Cranmer, who was always ready to return good for evil, and not only kept no enmity against him, but went forthwith, and obtained the king's pardon for him, though with difficulty.[1]

The new wars, meanwhile, went on apace. In May 1544, a fleet sent northwards surprised and burned down Edinburgh, and laid waste the country round; returning after this highly Christian act. To meet the costs, the unworthy resort of debasing the currency was introduced, while the money which was intrinsically worth less was proclaimed of a higher nominal value than before. In July Henry sailed over to France in a vessel with sails of cloth of gold, for, whoever suffered from evil times, his lavish prodigality on himself and his pomp continued the same. Boulogne after a time was taken, but not before the cost of the expedition had risen to the enormous sum of £587,000, then worth twelve times that value. The prize, moreover, was worthless, for Charles presently deserted Henry, and left him to face France alone, and in consequence, the troops were brought back to England in October.

During his absence the queen had acted as regent, but Audley had died, and Wriothesley, a strong Romanist, had been made chancellor. Gardiner and his party, besides, were still on the whole in the ascendant, and the state of things was gradually becoming much to his liking. "Soul masses," "censing of images," and "ear confessions," were rigidly enforced; the authority of Scripture was depreciated, as of old, in contrast with that of the Fathers. Old ceremonies, of late years falling into deserved disuse, were now "seemly usages" and "godly constitutions;" Popery in short, without the Pope, was rising again to its full glory. Spiritual religion, indeed, could not hope to flourish under a bishop who kept two mistresses, but rites and ceremonies were not affected by its absence.

Parliament met again in January, 1545, for Henry needed

[1] Strype's Cranmer, i. 271.

more money. A "benevolence" was therefore demanded, and of course granted, but the people were very unwilling to be thus illegally taxed under the pretence of making voluntary gifts. Only one man, however, a rich London alderman, ventured obstinately to refuse, but so utterly was the old Constitution now crushed, that he was sent, in punishment, as a common soldier to Scotland, with special orders to put him on the hardest posts. The French war dragged along wearily; Francis threatening to invade England; Charles refusing a passage through Germany to mercenaries Henry had hired. The Council of Trent, which was to reform the Romish Church, and make reunion possible to England and Germany, opened in May, and doubtless was one great cause of Henry's attitude to the Reformation, for he still clung to the dream of affiliation to Rome, while repudiating its authority. Parliament had to meet once more in November, to provide more money for the war, and another subsidy was extorted of 2s. 8d. in the pound on goods, and 4s. on lands, payable in two years; the unhappy clergy having to give 6s. in the pound of their incomes. But this was far from enough. There still remained a great number of colleges, chapels, charities, hospitals, and the like, endowed with lands, rents, and stipends, for saying masses for the souls of their founders and their families. All these Parliament dissolved at one blow, giving houses, lands, and goods of all kinds absolutely to the king. It was greatly feared that, after this, even the universities would be destroyed, and Dr. Cox, tutor to the young prince, ventured to write on the subject. He pointed out, as the Reformers were always doing, the great want of schools, preachers, and houses for orphans; that want would drive the clergy to flattery, superstition, and the old idolatry; that there were ravening wolves round the court who would devour universities, cathedrals, charities, and a thousand times more. Posterity would wonder at such things, and therefore he trusted that the universities would be spared. It is quite possible that their existence now, is due to this brave remonstrance.

That Cranmer should keep his place with the king was intolerable to Gardiner and his party. Two plots against him had already failed, but a third might be more successful. Norfolk and others of the Council, now under a Romish chancellor, resolved, in alliance with Gardiner, to make a last attempt. Affecting to lament the growth of heresy, and hinting that it would surely lead to rebellions and troubles like those of Münster, they submitted to the king that Cranmer was its chief promoter, and should certainly be examined. Henry forthwith demanded the names of his accusers, but was met by the reply, that if he were committed to the Tower, they would come forward, but dared not appear against him, as one of the Council, while free. On this, permission was given to arrest him next day, and send him to the Tower for trial. At midnight, however, Henry sent for him, and told him what had happened. His uprightness and simplicity once more saved him, pleasing Henry so, that he gave him his ring to produce to the Council, as a sign that the case was reserved for his own decision. "Do you not consider what an easy thing it is," said he, "to procure three or four false knaves to witness against you, if you were once in the Tower? I see you would run headlong to your undoing if I would suffer you?"

Next morning the archbishop was summoned to attend the Council, but when he came he was not admitted. Word having reached the king of his having been "kept among the pages, lackeys, and serving-men" in this way, Henry was indignant. On being at last admitted, however, the sight of the ring worked wonders. No one would say a word against him. He was once more saved.

Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, the king's brother-in-law, a man disposed to support Cranmer as far as was safe, died in August, and thus Cranmer was still more alone than ever. Never idle, however, he had proposed to Henry to revise the canons and Papal laws still in force, and had himself, with the help of learned friends, made a selection from them suited to

the altered position of the Church. It was an anomaly to have laws current which declared that he who did not acknowledge himself under the Pope, or own that the Bishop of Rome was primate of the whole world, was a heretic; that all the decrees of the Popes ought to be kept perpetually, as God's words, spoken by the mouth of Peter; that the See of Rome is without spot or wrinkle, and much more of the same tenor. The reform, had it been carried out, would have introduced a system of discipline into the Church which might have been further modified as required. But though the draft was completed, and nothing was wanted but the signature of the king, the Romish party found means of keeping him from signing; and thus one of the most useful reforms was put off, as it proved, for ever.

Cranmer had long striven to get some of the countless ceremonies in vogue abolished, and now, at last, succeeded. Henry had given the Church-service books to him for revision, and he had associated with him Heath[1] and Day,[2] the Bishops of Worcester and Chichester, with some others. Their unanimous opinion was, that many Church usages should be put down. Amongst others, they condemned that of creeping to the cross on Good Friday, the tendency of which showed itself in the Office for it—"We adore thy cross, O Lord;" "The clergy shall advance with bare feet to the cross, which is to be adored;" "Let the cross be set on the altar, in the front, where it may be adored by the people." It was now abolished by the king's command; the images in churches were not to be covered in Lent; no veil was to be put on the cross on Palm Sunday, and there was to be no kneeling to it, then, or at any other time.[3] These usages had been sanctioned in the Articles of 1536, but now, after ten years, Cranmer and his friends had won even Henry over to their abolition. Gardiner was for the time absent on a mission to the emperor, else it might not have been so easy to gain this step in advance. But for him, indeed, it is

[1] Consecrated 1540. [2] Consecrated 1543.

[3] Domestic Papers, 1546, vol. viii.

hard to say how much farther reform might not have advanced in these last months of Henry's reign, for we have it on Cranmer's authority that he had actually intended to change the mass itself into a communion, and to remove the "rood" or crucifix from all the churches, had not Gardiner turned him from doing so by writing from Germany, that any innovations in religion would cause the emperor to refuse to sign the much wished-for peace.[1] Even from a distance, he managed to be the evil genius of a pure faith.

While Henry was in this favourable mood, Cranmer used his influence to prevent any further spoliations of the Church by laymen and others. It had become a common practice for the greedy adventurers about court to use Henry's name, with or without his sanction, to demand that Church lands should be made over nominally to him, but really to themselves, for, by giving a trifling consideration to the crown, it was held that they had bought them from it. Cranmer had the honesty and courage to complain of the abuse, and succeeded in obtaining an order from the king that no Churchmen should henceforth alienate their lands without a written letter from him "declaring his pleasure."

The Romish party, however, was no less active in harrying and burning Protestants. Bishop Shaxton, who had been for a length of time in the Tower, was sentenced to be burned, but recanted—in preparation, as it proved, for open apostacy in the days of Queen Mary. Crome, a foremost London preacher, was brought into sore trouble, and men were burned in different places for refusing to believe in the mass. Its very name, indeed, was growing so increasingly hateful to Englishmen, that, as we have seen, even Henry was minded to abolish it for ever. What the "conspirators" of our day are trying to bring back among us was that, rather than receive which, our forefathers were content to die in the flames. "Thou good man,"

[1] Foxe, under date 1546.

asked a priest, of one victim at Ipswich, when at the stake, "dost thou not believe that the blessed sacrament of the altar is the very flesh and blood of Christ, and no bread, even as He was born of the Virgin Mary?" "I do not so believe," answered the martyr. "I believe that in the sacrament that Jesus Christ instituted at His last supper, His death and passion, and His bloodshedding for the redemption of the world, are to be remembered. It is yet bread, and more than bread, for it is consecrated to a holy use." Nobly said for a simple, unlettered man, whose brave English soul knew how to die for what he believed.

The most infamous of all these executions was that of a lady —Anne Askew, daughter of a Lincolnshire knight—who had been driven from her home by her husband, a bigoted Papist, for her love of the Scriptures and of evangelical truth. Having come to London, and having a brother in the king's body guard, she naturally went to court, where at that time there were a number of ladies, including the queen, favourably inclined to the Reformation. With these she was often received in the queen's private chambers at meetings for prayer, and exposition of the Scriptures by some Protestant minister. The mortification of the Romanists at seeing persons of the highest rank thus openly professing evangelical religion was extreme, and they determined to arrest Anne Askew that it might terrify the rest. She had been reported as saying that she would sooner read five lines in the Bible than hear five masses in the Church, and for this, among other whispers, she was thrown into prison, without being brought before the royal commissioners, and openly accused, as the law now required. When examined in the bishop's court, she was asked if she did not believe that the sacrament hanging over the altar was the very body of Christ? "Why was St. Stephen stoned to death?" said she, in reply. But her questioner would not answer, for St. Stephen had said that he saw the Son of Man sitting (in a bodily form) at the right hand of God, which made it impossible to conceive of

His being also everywhere bodily present in the sacrament. Next brought before the Lord Mayor, a bigoted papist, he gravely asked her whether a mouse, if it ate the host, received God or no? "I made no answer, but smiled," says Anne. Bonner's chancellor, on this, sharply said, "St. Paul forbade women to speak or to talk of the Word of God." "How many women," replied she, "have you seen go into the pulpit and preach?" "Never any," said he. "You ought not then to find fault with poor women, except they have offended the law," was the clever retort. A lady by birth, she was at the time about twenty-five years of age, and the mother of two children.

After twelve days' further illegal imprisonment, one of her cousins succeeded in getting her out on bail, and she was thus for a time set at liberty. It had been difficult to obtain even this. The Lord Mayor bade him apply to the bishop's chancellor, and he, again, referred him to Bonner, who called Anne before him, and examined her at great length. Among other things, he asked her if she did not think that soul masses helped souls departed? "It is great idolatry," she replied, "to believe in them more than in the death which Christ died for us." A number of articles having been drawn up by the bishop for her to sign, she wrote,—"I believe so much thereof as Holy Scripture doth agree thereto." This was not enough. She must sign the document. She then wrote, "I, Anne Askew, do believe all manner of things contained in the faith of the Catholic Church." Bonner saw her meaning, and "flung into his own chamber in a great fury."[1] He would hardly listen to the proposal for bail.

Continuing to meet with the Protestant ladies after her liberation, Anne was once more arrested and brought before the Privy Council, next year, 1546. Happily, Cranmer had nothing to do with the case from first to last. It was a triumph of which Bonner and Gardiner had all the glory. "Tell me your

[1] Bale's Select Works, 177.

opinion on the sacrament," asked Lord Chancellor Wriothesley. "I believe," said she, "that so oft as I, in a Christian congregation, receive the bread in remembrance of Christ's death, and with thanksgiving, I receive therewith the fruits also of His most glorious passion." "That which you call your God," she added, "is but a piece of bread; and for more proof thereof, let it but lie in the box three months, and it will be mouldy, and turn to nothing that is good." "Make a direct answer to the question," said Gardiner. "I will not sing a new song of the Lord," replied she, "in a strange land." "You speak in parables," said Gardiner. "It is best for you," she answered, "for if I show the open truth, ye will not accept it." "You are a parrot," retorted the bishop angrily. But Anne had her noble answer: "I am ready," said she, "to suffer all things at your hands, not only your rebukes, but all that shall follow besides, yea, and all that gladly." A second examination followed next day. "You shall be burned," said Bonner. "I have searched all the Scriptures," replied she, "yet could I never find that either Christ or His apostles put any creature to death."

She was now sent back to prison, so ill with her trials that she seemed like to die. "In all my life afore," said she, "I was never in such pain." She had conferred with Dr. Crome formerly, but he had weakly recanted when brought up lately, and now she wished to see Latimer, then a prisoner in the Tower. But such a favour could not be granted her. She had a right, by law, to be tried by a jury, but law was nothing in those days, and on the 28th of June she was condemned by the Lord Chancellor and the Council, without a trial, to be burned, for having denied the bodily presence of Christ in the Mass. Being asked if she wished for a priest, she smiled and said "she would confess her faults unto God, for she was sure He would hear her with favour."

While in Newgate, she bore herself with calm greatness of soul. A "confession" which she wrote, is a wonder of acuteness, and the very triumph of a heavenly spirit. Even her

signature to it is unique. "Written by me, Anne Askew, that neither wish death, nor yet fear his might; and as merry as one that is bound for heaven." Some verses she composed in the interval before her execution have a ring and spirit in them that mark the true heroine. Here are some of them :—

"On Thee my care I cast,
For all their cruel spite;
I set not by their haste,
For Thou art my delight.

"I saw a royal throne[1]
Where Justice should have sat,
But in her stead was one
Of muddy, cruel wit.

"Then thought I, Jesus, Lord,
When Thou shalt judge us all,
Hard is it to record
On these men[2] what will fall."

Anne had rested her faith on the Scriptures, and had evidently studied Protestant books. Gardiner and his allies therefore obtained from Henry, eight days before her death, a fresh proclamation forbidding any person whatever "to receive, take, or keep in their possession the text of the New Testament, of Tyndale's or Coverdale's translation, nor any other than is permitted by Act of Parliament." All Protestant books also were prohibited, such as Frith's, Tyndale's, Wycliffe's, Coverdale's, or those of Barnes, and the like. All such were to be delivered up and publicly burned. But events were stronger than the king, and the proclamation happily remained a dead letter.

It was not enough to burn the one young creature they had in their power, if the Romanists could not get her to implicate others. In defiance of all law, therefore, the chancellor and his party had gone to the Tower to ask her about her accomplices,

[1] The Chancellor's seat. [2] The Chancellor, Bonner, and Gardiner.

naming the Duchess of Suffolk, Henry's sister, the Countess of Sussex, and others, in hopes of getting evidence against them, and on her refusing to betray any one, they actually put her on the rack. Even then, she gave no hint and did not utter a cry. "Strain her on the rack again," cried Wriothesley, enraged, but the lieutenant of the Tower refused. On this the lord chancellor and Rich, a privy councillor, themselves racked her until her joints were almost torn asunder. "My lord chancellor and Master Rich took pains to rack me with their own hands," said she afterwards, "till I was nigh dead. Then the lieutenant caused me to be loosed; incontinently I swooned, and then they recovered me again. After that I sat two long hours, reasoning with my lord chancellor on the bare floor, where he, with many flattering words, persuaded me to leave my opinion." Even Henry upbraided Wriothesley for his cruelty.

The tragedy ended on the 16th July. They were obliged to carry Anne to the stake on a chair, for she could not walk. Three other Protestants were to be burned with her,—a priest, one of the king's household, and a man from Colchester. All four stood firm in their faith, and passed to their reward, victorious for us as well as themselves, for the flames in which they perished helped to kindle an undying hatred of Popery, which by God's grace will bring to nothing all attempts to restore it amongst us.

The war with France dragged on till August, 1546, Boulogne being given up, after having cost, one way or other, a million and a quarter pounds, equal then, it is to be remembered, to twelve times the amount now. Henry was now fast sinking. His corpulence was growing so excessive that erelong he had to be moved about by a machine, and his leg was worse than ever. The effect on such a temper was terrible, and made it dangerous to be near him. Even the queen nearly perished through the advantage taken of his peevish ferocity by Gardiner and Wriothesley. Encouraged by their success in destroying Anne

Askew, they hoped now to strike at still higher victims. Catherine had been guilty of the imprudence of holding her point in argument with Henry on religious subjects a little too tenaciously, and had roused him against her. Noticing this, Gardiner and his fellow conspirators hinted to him that she was a dangerous heretic, whom the honour of religion and the safety of the realm required to be impeached. In a fit of insane malevolence it was forthwith permitted that she should be so, and the writing when drawn out duly received his signature. Providentially, Wriothesley dropped it in the palace, and it was carried to the queen, who showed rare presence of mind in dealing with it. Going to Henry, she reintroduced the subject of her unfortunate conversation, accepted his opinions, and declined to argue with him, saying it was for her to listen to his wisdom, not to speak, and that if ever she had disputed with him, it was to gain information and divert him from his pain. The soft flattery was all-powerful. Embracing her tenderly, he assured her of his unchangeable favour and protection! The scene took place in the garden, which was presently entered by Wriothesley with men to arrest the queen; but to his astonishment he was assailed by Henry as a knave, fool, and beast, and told to be gone. The plot recoiled on its authors. Gardiner was struck off the privy council, and from the number of the king's executors, and was ordered not to appear again in the royal presence.

In these last months of Henry's reign we catch one more glimpse of Latimer. On the 13th May, the great preacher, who had been silenced for years, was brought before the Council, which was at the same time busy with the victims who were to be burned with Anne Askew. Tunstal and Gardiner have left an account of the proceedings, but it is too long to insert. As bold as ever, he told Gardiner and the rest that their doings were more extreme than if he lived under the Turk. He knew in fact that they were utterly illegal. The Council were no match for his shrewdness, and could make nothing of him, his answers

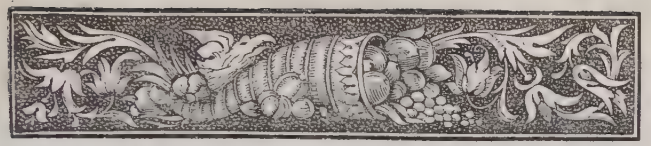
"being in such sort as we be as wise almost as we were before." Nothing remained but to send him back to the Tower, where he remained till Henry's death. They were afraid as yet to burn him.

The court factions had grown more embittered against each other as Henry's end visibly approached, for each hoped to hold the regency which evidently was near. On one side were the Norfolks, the hope of the Romanists; on the other, the Seymours, who had been ennobled as uncles of the young prince. Most of both sets were worthless enough, but the Seymours had the advantage of easiest access to Henry. Persuading him that Norfolk and his son, the Earl of Surrey, a man of high accomplishments and rare genius, hot in temper it may be, but very young, were plotting to get the prince into their power as soon as he himself died, he had them both arrested. No charges could be more vague than those made against them, but the utmost haste was made to get them executed before he should die. Surrey was beheaded on the 21st of January, 1547, but the bill of attainder for his father could not be got through Parliament and be assented to before the 27th. The execution was fixed, however, for the next day. Before day-break, however, Henry was dead, and no one dared put to death the greatest subject in the realm under such circumstances.

Fourteen years had passed since the divorce of Catherine, but they were the most momentous in the history of England. The principle of priestly authority in religion, that tap-root of all superstition, had unwittingly been destroyed for ever in the repudiation of the Pope. The monasteries had been swept away. The Church had been made subordinate to the State, that is, the nation. The clergy had been made amenable to the same law as other citizens. The images which filled the land had been cast down. Grovelling ceremonies that degraded religion had been abolished. The pulpit had been restored to its rightful

[1] State Papers, Henry VIII., vol. i. p. 848.

prominence. Prayers in English had taken taken the place of services in Latin, which no one understood, and the Bible had been spread before the people in their own tongue. No reaction of Henry's later years could undo these reforms, nor was their influence restricted to his life, for through them, age after age, the spirit of religious liberty has been preserved, and spiritual religion promoted.



CHAPTER XXIII.

THE PROTECTORATE.

THE executors of Henry VIII., having been selected at the moment of the downfall of the Duke of Norfolk and his adherents, showed a decisive predominance of the "new nobility," who formed the other party at court. Norfolk had hoped to be the foremost personage in the new reign, and, as he was the lay head of the Romanists, this would have finally secured Gardiner a triumph in the ruin of the Reformation. His fall left the new men supreme in the councils of the new king, and they, whether from hope of getting more of the spoils of the Church, or from conviction, favoured the Reformers. Things had gradually been tending towards further advance before Henry's death, and would apparently have been erelong changed greatly in favour of evangelical religion had he lived much longer. The intrigues and craft of Gardiner had led him to distrust his party, and the burning of Anne Askew and the three others at Smithfield, in June, 1546, had finally revolted him so much, that henceforth the question of sweeping reform was only a matter of political policy. "There will be a change of religion in England," wrote Hooper in 1546, "and the king will take up the gospel of Christ, in case the emperor should be defeated: should the gospel sustain a loss he will then retain his impious mass."[1] The defeat

[1] Original Letters, 41.

of the German Reformers at the Battle of Mühlberg, in April, 1547 would, perhaps, have kept him from making any great changes for a while longer, but death cut him off before Charles won that victory.

The young king's uncles were the natural guardians of a minority, and might hope for a long regency, as Edward was only nine years and three months old when his father died.[1] They were brothers of Jane Seymour, and hence inclined to the Reformers, but their interest aided their bias, for both had already benefited by the lands of the Church, and both expected further advantage from them. The elder, now Earl of Hertford, was ardent, earnest, and enthusiastic, on the side of progress, and though stained with the vices of the age, was an honest believer in liberty, and a friend of the people. Of good abilities, he was, nevertheless, ill-qualified to lead the nation or to guard against his own enemies, for he wanted political sagacity, and laid himself open to his ever-watchful enemies by his rashness.

Unwilling to share power with a whole council, Hertford's first step, which was at once sanctioned, was to get himself named Protector, acting in the place of the king. Wriothesley, the Chancellor, a bitter Romanist—the torturer of Anne Askew—having acted in some things without the consent of his colleagues, was compelled to resign, and thus the field was left free for Hertford and the Reformers. Meanwhile, titles were freely given, in alleged accordance with the will of Henry. Hertford was created Duke of Somerset; Lisle, the eldest son of the Dudley of Henry VII.'s reign, who had afterwards been beheaded for his extortions, was made Earl of Warwick, and Wriothesley, to console him, became Earl of Southampton. The state of the exchequer for a time prevented the appropriation of lavish grants claimed under the will, but they were only deferred.

The new state of things was shown by an order at the first

[1] Mary was now 35, Elizabeth 13.

sitting of the Council[1] that the bishops should renew their commissions. Cranmer's idea that they held authority simply from the crown was thus put in force, and the episcopate was formally treated as only a creation of the royal pleasure, in virtue of the Act of Supremacy. Their appointments were held to be ended by the death of the reigning prince, and were now renewed by letters patent, during their good behaviour.

Abundant proof was presently shown that the people had not been consulted in the reactionary course of the last few years, and that the Reformation, if left to the great cities and towns, at least, would have spared very few traces of Popery. The clergy might be Romanists as a body, and the ignorant peasantry might still blindly follow them, but the cities and towns were largely Protestant. The churchwardens and curates of St. Martin's in London, of their own authority pulled down the images of the saints in their church: whitewashed the paintings on the walls, and replaced the crucifix by the royal arms and texts of Scripture. The people of Portsmouth followed their example; at St. John's College, Cambridge, a student secretly cut the string by which the pix was hung over the altar, and even the Chapter of Canterbury, needing money to repair the Cathedral, sent a crucifix and a pix[2] to the mint. An official reprimand, at most, followed, nor could Gardiner get more satisfaction from Somerset than a clever retort, that it was not worse to destroy an image than to burn a Bible. The Princess Mary succeeded no better in an attempt to get things continued as Henry had left them, till the new king was of age.

There was, indeed, sore need for sweeping reforms. "As far as true religion is concerned," writes Hooper, shortly before Henry's death, "idolatry is nowhere in greater vigour. Our king has destroyed the Pope, but not Popery: he has expelled all the monks and nuns, and pulled down the monasteries; he

[1] February 2nd, 1547.

[2] Pix—the sacred box in which the host is kept after consecration.

has caused all their possessions to be transferred into his exchequer, and yet they are bound, even the frail female sex, by the king's command, to perpetual chastity. England has, at this time, at least ten thousand nuns, not one of whom is allowed to marry. The impious mass, the most shameful celibacy of the clergy, the invocation of saints, auricular confession, superstitious abstinence from meats, and purgatory, were never before held by the people in greater esteem than at the present moment."[1] There were few schools, and these ill-supplied and miserably poor. The universities were in the hands of bigots, who spent their strength in defending absurdities, and neglected useful learning.[2] Latimer calculated that the number of students at the two universities was fewer by ten thousand after the alienation of abbey and church lands had left no mercenary attractions in the sacred offices. While the Church retained its immense wealth they were always full: but religion had charms for comparatively few when the golden prospect was gone. The monasteries had corrupted the whole ecclesiastical world. "They had grown up into such monstrous sanctuaries for all kinds of vice," says the apostolic Bernard Barton, Rector of Houghton-le-Spring,[3] "that their cry, no doubt, like that of Sodom, ascended into the ears of God. Besides, consider what pests they were to all good learning and religion; how they preyed upon all the rectories in the kingdom; amassing to themselves, for the support of their vices, that wealth which was meant by pious founders for the maintenance of industrious clergymen."

The parish priests all over the land were, as a rule, miserably ignorant. Tyndale, so late as 1530, asserted that there were 20,000 who could not turn a line of the Lord's Prayer, which they repeated in Latin, into English, and Bishop Hooper, even

[1] Zurich Letters, 36.

[2] Life of Bernard Gilpin, by W. Gilpin, M.A., 116.

[3] Born 1517, died 1583.

in the end of Edward's reign, found scores in Gloucestershire who could not tell who was the author of the Lord's Prayer, or where it was to be found. Many of the monks had renounced the Pope's authority and sworn allegiance to the king, that they might get livings for the avowed purpose of excluding Protestants, and they were on a par for ignorance with the other rectors, vicars, and curates. "Their filling the pulpits," says Camden, "they thought highly meritorious, and hoped the Pope would dispense with their oath on such an occasion." Many monks, also, received benefices to save their pensions. All that Cranmer and his friends could do under such circumstances was to take the best men they could find, but even they were too often ignorant enough. "He knows a few Latin words, but no sentences"—was a common note against priests' names in archidiaconal visitations, in an age when the whole service of the Church had hitherto been in that language. Non-residence and pluralities, the legacy of the pre-Reformation Church, were shamefully common. Three, four, and five livings were held by one man. Preaching was utterly neglected in many parts. Some parishes had had none for twenty years. "After I entered on the parish of Easington," says Bernard Barton, "and began to preach, I soon procured mighty and grievous adversaries, for that I preached against pluralities and non-residence. Some said, all that preached that doctrine became heretics soon after. Others found great fault, for that I preached repentance and salvation by Christ, and did not make whole sermons, as they did, about transubstantiation, purgatory, holy water, images, prayers to saints, and the like."[1]

In Houghton-le-Spring, he tells us, "scarce any traces of true Christianity were left. All the idle ceremonies of Popery were carried higher than you would perhaps elsewhere find them, and were considered the essentials of religion." So carefully, indeed, had the bishops and justices of the peace kept the people in

[1] Life, 81.

ignorance, that King Edward's proclamations for a change of worship had not been heard of at the time of that prince's death. Even so late as the year 1570, Archbishop Grindal had to prohibit pedlars from selling their wares in the church porches in time of service; had to require that parish clerks should be able to read, and that no "lords of misrule, or summer lords and ladies, or any disguised persons, morrice-dancers and others, should come irreverently into church, or play any unseemly parts, with scoffs, jests, wanton gestures, or ribald talk, in the time of divine service." Even in the south, though it was much more civilized than the north, the diocese of Ely, which was quite as good as others, had forty-seven in a hundred and fifty-six parishes with no ministers at all; fifty-seven were in the hands of careless non-residents, and only fifty-two were regularly served. The Tudor system of Reformation, which gave the people no voice whatever in the changes required, had been partial at best, but even the changes made took generations to incorporate them into English thought and life.

Such a state of the clergy, continued as it had been for centuries, had corrupted the whole nation, and the general tone of society in turn reacted on the Church. "The land is full of idle pastors," says Barton in his sermon before Edward VI.,[1] "and how can it be otherwise, when the nobility and patrons of livings put in just who will allow them to take out most profit? A Reformation! There is as much ignorance, superstition, and idolatry as ever; which, as far as I can foresee, will remain: for benefices are everywhere so plundered and robbed by patrons, that in a little time nobody will bring up their children to the Church. It is amazing to see how the universities are diminished within these few years."

The cry rose, indeed, from all parts, in these evil times, at the grasping avarice and tyranny of the rich and great. At court, everything was bought and sold: employments, honours, favours

[1] 1552

of all sorts. Bribery and wrong were common among the judges, and grievous extortions and frauds disgraced trade. Latimer was fain to see the skin of a judge hung up as a warning to the rest, and told the king, in a sermon, that he had no time so much as to look on his book, for attending to the cases of poor men that had been wronged and could not get justice. "The people are sorely oppressed," writes Hooper, in 1549, "by the marvellous tyranny of the nobility." Everywhere, the yeomanry were being depressed into labourers by the system of inclosures: everywhere the old nobility and the new were bent on seizing all the land they could get, whether that of the people or of the Church; and to the profligate transfer of Church lands that of the tithes was added, laymen holding them largely, as the monks had done before them, to the perpetuation of the poverty of the parish clergy, which had been so great a scandal for ages. It was the misfortune of Cranmer and the Reformers that they had to stand helplessly by and see the resources to which they looked for the regeneration of England fought for and eagerly seized as personal plunder by men who pretended sympathy with them. The spoliation of the Church had been resisted by the primate and those round him earnestly and nobly, but was effected by the votes of the Romanist bishops, to bribe Henry to favour their side, and crush their opponents. Its spoliation by laymen was opposed as stoutly and vainly.

Death had been busy among Cranmer's supporters. The Lord Chancellor Audley, the Duke of Suffolk, Sir Edward Baynton, the first Lord of the Bedchamber,—Sir Thomas Poinings, the king's deputy at Calais,—Sir Thomas Wyat, and Dr. Butts, the king's physician—all members of the privy council, and all staunch Reformers—had died of the plague or of fever before Edward's accession,[1] so that, to use Hooper's words, "the country was now left altogether to the bishops and those who despised God and all true religion." But the new reign erelong

[1] Orig. Letters, 37.

drew back from the Continent the exiles who had fled before the Six Articles, and their arrival not only upheld the advances already made, but marked a new departure in the history of the Reformation, for they had been in contact with the Lutheranism of Germany, and the Puritanism of Geneva, and had caught the spirit of the two systems. Miles Coverdale, Hooper, Philpot, afterwards Mary's first martyr, and Rogers, the editor of Tyndale's Bible, came amongst others. Latimer was set free from the Tower, and, above all, the Reformers were strong in the Protestant education of the young king, and the Protestant principles of his uncle, the Protector. Three of the bishops, moreover, were Reformers, and Cranmer's chaplain, Ridley, was at once a learned and prudent helper. Gardiner, excluded by Henry from the regency, could do little to hinder the work of God.

The Church was "little but a ruinous heap: its revenues dissipated, its ministers divided, its doctrines unsettled, and its laws obsolete, impracticable, and unadapted to the great change it had sustained."[1] Gross abuses of every kind abounded: religion had to be rescued from a heathenism of forms: men had to learn that heaven was not a matter of payment to the priest, and that their sins could not be compounded for money. The air reeked with pestilent immorality, inconceivable after three centuries of Protestantism. However much there may still be to reform amongst us, England is a different land in its higher tone of life since Popery was cast out. Christianity had virtually to be re-introduced by the Reformers. Yet the task needed wisdom no less than a lofty ideal. To proceed too quickly was dangerous, for Rome was still strong in the ignorance and superstition she had fostered so long: to be too cautious would be unfaithfulness. Cranmer and the friends of the Gospel had a difficult task, but they set themselves bravely to do it.

[1] J. J. Blunt.

A royal visitation of the churches was ordered over all England, and a fresh set of injunctions issued for the guidance of the commissioners. Meanwhile, no ministers were to preach in any churches but their own. To each company of visitors one or more preachers were added, to address the people in the different circuits. The mode taken by the visitors, as shown in the case of St. Paul's, London, was to summon the bishop and the members of each cathedral, and administer to them an oath to renounce the Pope, to uphold the king's supremacy, and that they would make known whatever needed reformation in their church and diocese. A book of Homilies had been already prepared, to assist the clergy in preaching, and check their dissemination of Romanism. Copies of this were given to each bishop for the churches of his diocese, and the injunctions were handed them with strict commands that they should be observed. The canons and priests were next examined, on oath, as to their lives and doctrines, with what result, in too many cases, may be judged from the fact that several of the canons and priests of St. Paul's had to own that they were leading immoral lives. But under men like Bonner and Gardiner what could be expected of the clergy at large?

The injunctions throw interesting light on the state of things from which Cranmer and his fellows delivered the nation. They required that all the clergy, of every rank, should keep the statutes already passed respecting the Pope and the Church, and the royal supremacy. They were not to "extol or set forth any images, relics, or miracles, for superstition or lucre, nor allure the people to pilgrimage to saints or images," but "to teach that all goodness, health, and grace, ought to be both asked and looked for only of God, and of none other."

All the clergy were to preach at least four times a year, "purely and sincerely declaring the Word of God, and exhorting their hearers to the works of faith, mercy, and charity, specially prescribed and commanded in Scripture," and showing them that "works devised by men's fantasies, such as wandering to

pilgrimages, offering of money, candles, or tapers, to relics, or images, or kissing or licking them, &c.," tended to idolatry and superstition, and were contrary to Scripture.

Images abused by being made objects of pilgrimage or offerings, or being honoured with incense burned to them, were to be destroyed, and no torches, candles, tapers, or images of wax were to be set before either image or picture. Two lights on the "altar" might remain, to signify that Christ is the light of the world, and images when retained were to be declared only a remembrance of the holy lives of those they represented.

On every holy day the clergy were to recite openly and plainly from the pulpit the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments in English, "to the intent the people may learn the same by heart;" and all parents and householders were to be exhorted to teach them to their families.

Parents and others were to be counselled to set their children and servants from their childhood "either to learning or to some honest exercise, occupation, or husbandry"—to prevent future idleness. The due and reverent ministering of the sacraments was to be provided for. When necessarily absent from their cures, the clergy were to see that they left them, not to "rude and unlearned persons, but to honest, well-learned, and expert curates." Within three months a copy of the whole Bible, "of the largest volume, in English, was to be procured and set up in every church," for many were still without one, the old clergy still offering a stubborn resistance to Bible-reading by the laity, notwithstanding previous injunctions. Once more they were commanded to discourage no man "authorized and licensed thereto" from reading any part of it, in English or Latin, but rather to "comfort and exhort every person to read it." To assist its intelligent study a copy of Erasmus' "Paraphrase of the New Testament," in English, then the only one in existence, was ordered to be, likewise, set up in every church; a book which even so sensitive a critic as

Herder says is worth its weight in gold for its clearness of thought and beauty of language,[1] and which our own Milman pronounces "invaluable."[2] Hitherto the sense of Scripture had been buried under layers of mystic, allegorical, scholastic, and traditional interpretation, and we can hardly, therefore, conceive the service rendered by the diffusion of an Exposition which, for the first time, after ages, swept aside all this accumulation, and put within the reach of all the pure gold of the plain, literal meaning of the sacred writings. Erasmus, the "odious bird" as Gardiner called him, "which had laid the egg hatched by Luther:" the satirist whose words like earthquake-waves had spread over Christendom and shaken the vast fabric of religious imposture and corruption: the scholar whose labours had quickened and widened the zeal of the age for the New Learning in its earlier stages: the Biblical critic whose Greek Testament had led the world back, after centuries of night, to the pure day of the written Word, thus became the pattern of sacred interpretation for all succeeding ages of the English Church.

The injunctions went on to forbid any clergymen frequenting taverns or ale-houses, giving themselves to drinking or riot, spending their time idly at dice, cards, tables, or gambling—a mark of the condition of the order in those days. No one was to be "confessed" who could not recite "the articles of their faith, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments in English:" no one was to be allowed to preach without a license, and a register was to be kept in the churches of all baptisms, marriages, and burials; a splendid step in advance. Penance was no longer to be commuted for money: and it was to be seen that "excessive sums were not taken" for "religious services," for "the concealment of vice," or for "induction into benefices." Every beneficed clergyman with an income of £20 was to give

[1] Briefe über das Studium der Theologie. Brief, 22.

[2] Essays, 121.

ten shillings a year to the poor: every one who had £100 a year was to give an exhibition to a scholar in one of the universities, and another for each additional £100. Twenty per cent. of the incomes was to be spent yearly on the churches and parsonages till they were put in perfect repair, for in many parts the priests were wilfully letting them go to ruin; and every clergyman was to buy for himself, within three months, a Latin and English New Testament, and a copy of Erasmus' "Paraphrase." The Epistles and Gospels were to be read in church in English, and two lessons in English, from the Old and New Testaments, were to be read, as now, during each public service. All processions about the church or churchyard were forbidden, except that, "before high mass, the priests shall kneel in the midst of the church and sing or say, distinctly, the Litany, in English. All ringing of bells during service was prohibited, except one bell to be rung before the sermon, to call men to it. The people were to be taught from the pulpit the superstition and sin of many of the practices in use, such as casting holy water about one's bed, upon images and other dead things, or carrying on his person holy bread, or St. John's Gospel, or making wooden crosses on Palm Sunday "in time of reading of the Passion," or keeping of private holy days "as bakers, brewers, smiths, shoemakers, and such others do" in honour of their patron saints; or ringing holy bells, or blessing with the holy candle to discharge the burden of sin, or drive away devils, or put away dreams. A poor's box was to be put up in each church for contributions, and men making their wills were to be exhorted to leave to it part at least of the money they formerly gave for pardons, pilgrimages, trentals, decking of images, offering of candles, giving to friars, &c. If more were received than the poor needed, the surplus might be devoted to mending the roads, or repairing the church, church funds rising from other sources being added to the amount. King Henry's "English Primer" was to be used by all for private devotion, and all chantry priests were to be diligent "in teaching

youth to read and write, and bring them up in good manners and other virtuous exercises."[1]

Both the Injunctions and Homilies roused furious opposition; Gardiner and Bonner in particular protesting against them. The heads of the reactionary party had finally renounced the sympathy for the New Learning of men like Warham, and had come to denounce even Erasmus as vehemently as their predecessors applauded him.

Edward had begun his reign in January, and all this had been done before Parliament and Convocation met in November. Momentous changes were to be introduced by these. Convocation, led by Cranmer, and unable to oppose the wish of the dominant party, unanimously ordered that henceforth the "body of the Lord was to be received under both kinds, namely, of bread and wine," and the first Act passed by Parliament confirmed this return to ancient practice. The Six Articles, with every other penal Act relating to "doctrine and matters of religion," were repealed, though offences against the royal supremacy, or such as came within the reach of common law, were still expressly held liable to indictment.

Reform was now steadily advancing. To check the disturbance between the Old and New parties, as well as to put down superstition, the practice of carrying candles on Candlemas day,[2] of bearing ashes on Ash Wednesday, or palms on Palm Sunday, were put down; but at the same time only these and such changes as were authorized were permitted. The repeal of the Six Articles had been followed by a resolution of Convocation, passed by fifty-three voices against twenty-two, repealing all prohibition against the marriage of priests, though the Act of Parliament required was not passed till later. King Henry's proposal to turn the mass into a communion, which Cranmer so much desired, was now also carried towards realization, but with the same caution as marked all his other steps. A series of queries

[1] Strype's Cranmer, ii. 456 ff.

[2] See page 362.

on the subject was circulated among the bishops and leading clergy, that the answers might bring the whole question into discussion. But the ecclesiastical mind, ever slow to change, was as yet unprepared to move in this matter, and, with the exception of Cranmer himself, and Ridley, now Bishop of Rochester, all the dignitaries and others addressed clung to the Romish doctrine. Reformation always springs from the laity, and is only adopted by the clergy of any Church after public opinion has made it orthodox. Ever zealous in educating the people, Cranmer issued a catechism, which he had modified from a German original. It is interesting as having led to his first public repudiation of the mass, for the picture, in the original, of a priest putting the wafer into the communicant's mouth, was changed for one representing Christ eating His Last Supper with His disciples, and it was said that "in the sacrament we receive the body and blood of Christ *spiritually*," only. He also published a treatise to prove that Scripture was the one rule of faith, by which everything must be justified. One passage in it is interesting even yet for the lurid glare it sheds over the "pre-reformation Church." After making a heavy complaint of the frequency of adultery, and even worse, among the clergy, Cranmer adds, "And in my memory, which is now above thirty years, and also by the information of others twenty years older than I am, I could never learn that one priest was punished." To revive the universities, he used all his influence at court to have their privileges confirmed, and a stop put to the plunder of ecclesiastical preferments by greedy courtiers. Somerset already held a deanery, a cathedral treasurership, and four prebends, and his son had three hundred pounds a year from a bishopric, in accordance with the practice revived by Henry VIII., against which the Reformers had fought so bravely. But it was an uphill struggle, where despotism and self-interest had the vantage-ground. Yet much had been done. Cranmer himself sums up the changes hitherto effected, in his Homily on Good Works, thus:—"Briefly, to pass over the ungodly and counterfeit

religion (of monks and friars), let us rehearse some other kinds of papistical superstitions and abuses (removed), as of beads, of Lady-psalters, and rosaries, of fifteen O's,[1] of St. Bernard's verses, of St. Agatha's letters,[2] of purgatory, of masses satisfactory, of stations and jubilees, of feigned relics, of hallowed beads, bells, bread, water, palms, candles, fire, and such other; of superstitious fastings, of fraternities, of brotherhoods, of pardons, and such-like merchandise, &c. &c."

The project of marrying Edward to the young Princess Mary of Scotland might have ripened peacefully, and brought England and Scotland nearer, even if it had never been realized, had Somerset been firm or wise. The Romish party in Scotland, under Cardinal Beaton, were determined to thwart it, but his murder removed that hindrance. Somerset, however, left the English party—that is, the Reformers—to be besieged in St. Andrews by the French, to whom they had to surrender, and then madly resolved to force Scotland to keep the marriage treaty, by an invasion. A great English victory followed, at Pinkey, near Musselburgh, on September 10, 1547, but it naturally ruined the English cause. Mary, not long after, was spirited off to France, with what results both countries were erelong to feel.

The determined opposition of Bonner and Gardiner to every proposal of reform in the Church had led to both being cast into Fleet prison, but Bonner recanted presently, and Gardiner was released in January, only, however, to be imprisoned next June, till the accession of Mary. The barbarity of the age, as well as its unprincipled passion for money, marked these months by a law against idle persons, which was so savage, it had to be repealed two years after. Any person "loitering, without work, three days together," could be taken before a justice; branded on the breast with a V, for vagabond, and sentenced to two years' slavery, during which he might be

[1] Fifteen prayers of magical power, beginning with O.

[2] Golden letters from the Virgin, warning Frederic II. to protect St. Agatha.

punished by "beating, chaining, or the like;" attempts to escape incurring slavery for life, with an additional branding of S, to mark the fact. The harpies of the court passed another law equally hateful, sweeping into the treasury, or rather, mostly into their own pockets, "all colleges, chantries, and free chapels," for the retention of which for education and religion Cranmer and his friends had so earnestly striven. Heading the opposition, he once more attempted to prevent it, but in vain. The light had a sore struggle with the legacy of darkness left by Rome.

A proclamation issued in 1548 gives another glimpse of this chaos. The profound corruption of the past took long to overcome. As in German the word for a public fair is "messe,' the mass,—from fairs, with all their uproar, being habitually held at church doors, on Sundays and holy days, when mass was celebrated,—the churches in England had been desecrated by similar irreverence, and now, in the fierce strife between the old and the new, the turmoil too often passed from the doors to the interior. "Frays, quarrels, riots, and bloodsheddings" were not infrequent between the infuriated partisans of the opposite creeds: horses and mules were brought into and through churches, and hand-guns were fired off; at times, perhaps, in contempt of the fancied idolatry practised in too many, but as a rule, doubtless, by the half-savage population who had been left by the priests to sink into heathenism, and now found the churches, as Bernard Barton tells us, largely deserted by their incumbents, from sheer indifference and worldliness. Indeed it is hard to imagine that when churches were in use they could be made "like a stable or a common inn:" such abuses point rather to the worthlessness of a non-resident clergy, whose abandoned and neglected churches were left month by month unused for any sacred purpose. It is to be remembered that the incumbents, with very few exceptions, were still the men of the former system, and what their churches were, too often, the injunctions have shown.

But the savagery of some districts, and the theological hatreds of others, were not the only evils. The spoiling of the monasteries had set the example of the wrecking of sacred buildings, and too many of the upper classes, and even of the clergy and churchwardens, eager for plunder, hit on the plan of pretending commissions from the crown, to strip the churches of their chalices, silver crosses, bells, jewels, and costly ornaments, for their own profit. In great revolutions, as in war, lawlessness riots, and the Council had now to interfere. Sacrilege was not to be tolerated except when committed by themselves, or on their own behalf.

But order was slowly rising out of the anarchy which more or less fills the interval of transition from the old to the new, in all cases. The removal of all images from the churches had anticipated and prevented an outburst of fanaticism like that of the image-breakers of the Netherlands: the change of the mass to a communion-service had led the way to a repudiation of the Romish doctrine; confession had been made optional; and the English Bible and English prayers were working like leaven in the popular conscience. But, throughout, a spirit of moderation and compromise marked every step of the Reformers. Unwilling on one side to shock, and perhaps rouse into fury, the hereditary prejudices of the country-people, and anxious, on the other, to check the unregulated zeal of extreme opinions, everything was done by slow and imperfect advances. The result, however, was unhappy, as all compromises in matters of conscience must always be. Gardiner and his party were furious at the desecration of the mass and the confessional, even in part, and the extreme Protestants were hardly less so that the whole body of Popish imposture, which had so long flourished, should not be removed. It seemed like mere worldly policy rather than the earnestness of sincere conviction, and voices rose high against it on every side. But had Cranmer's successors only been as wise as he, and continued, step by step, the introduction of a thoroughly evangelical system, weeding

out, as the nation was fit to bear it, the last fibres of sacerdotalism, we should have been spared many painful chapters in our ecclesiastical history. Nor would there ever have been any Puritan dissent, to threaten the very existence of the Church. But the men of Elizabeth's day were unhappily cowed by the royal will, and proclaimed a "finality" when progress was more than ever imperative. No sane man would refuse to admit the necessity there has been, from time to time, of reform, peaceful and moderate, in our political constitution, and surely there must be as much need of it in our ecclesiastical. Timely reform, indeed, is the one escape from revolution in the Church as in the State, and the catastrophes in our ecclesiastical history have risen solely from the mad attempt to stand still while the world was moving. May the lessons of the past be a warning for the future! Wise concession, where there is reason for it, is ever the truest conservatism.

CHAPTER XXIV.

DEATH OF EDWARD VI.

THE year 1548 is for ever notable in the history of the Reformation as that in which Cranmer and his colleagues prepared for it the priceless gift of our English Liturgy. The Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Commandments, and the Communion had already been given to the people in English, but much remained in the Service, of the old corruptions of Popery, to which the bulk of the clergy, often old monks, tenaciously clung. One complete Service-book for the realm was the only remedy for ever-increasing irregularities, and this was now resolved upon. A commission of six bishops—not including Gardiner or Bonner, but, all, men appointed in Cromwell's day or since, and hence favourable to the Reformation, with six of the most learned of the Reforming clergy, Cranmer, as primate, presiding—was appointed to prepare the new book. It was finished and passed in Convocation in November, and received the final sanction of Parliament in January, 1549, Gardiner being safe in the Tower, and unable to hinder it.

With the truest wisdom, the commissioners shrank from attempting to compose an original Liturgy, and chose rather to use, as far as might be, the treasures which the past had bequeathed them. Hence, whatever was best in the Romish Missal and Breviary was retained, for it had not become Romish by having been for a time used by Rome. Ancient liturgies,

collects, and offices had happily survived, and from these the noblest were selected, Cranmer translating many of them himself into the grand English of which he was so great a master. The present and the future of the Church were thus happily linked to the past: the true spiritual continuity of faith and worship from the earliest ages preserved, and a fulness and incomparable grandeur secured for our formularies which the labours of no one generation could have produced.

To this crowning service of Cranmer England is indebted, next to his gift to it of the English Bible, for the permanence of the Reformation. The people could now, for the first time in their history, join intelligently in the worship of God, and unite their voices and hearts in the devotions of His House. Rome had used an unknown tongue, and had made the whole service a performance of priests, in which the congregation had neither sympathy nor share. The Reformers gave back to their countrymen what had originally been theirs, the power and right of taking part in the worship of their Maker. The clergyman, henceforth, was only the leader of the common devotions of his flock: the offices, from first to last, were in English, and the simplest peasant could join in ascriptions of praise and entreaties for pardon, which rose from minister and congregation alike.

The happy contrast between the English Prayer-book and the books of devotion it superseded was recognized at once by the people. Not only was the service now in their own language; Scripture lessons were introduced instead of monkish legends; the Bible was read through without interruptions; the Hail Mary omitted; the Lord's Prayer repeated audibly, not in secret; monkish metrical hymns cut out; prayers for the dead removed, along with invocations of saints, and superstitious consecrations and exorcisms; while the Absolution was turned into a prayer, instead of being a declaration of affected priestly power. Still more, the Prayer-book appealed solely to the Bible, and stripped the mysteries of the Church of all disguise, raising the standing of the people as much as it lowered

the arrogant claims of the Romish priesthood. No wonder it was hailed with delight by the nation. Its use had been appointed to begin at Whit Sunday, but in some places men could not wait so long, and introduced it at Easter. There was a magic in the sound of their native tongue in the House of God, which drew multitudes everywhere to hear it. The Popish books of devotion almost immediately fell into disuse, and were soon after ordered to be abolished and destroyed.

So pronounced an advance could not, however, be made without some commotion. The mass of the parish priests, wedded to the corruptions of Rome, opposed it bitterly, and spread disaffection among the ignorant peasantry, like that of the days of the Pilgrimage of Grace.

Somerset's misgovernment, moreover, created a general dissatisfaction. He had emptied the exchequer, and sanctioned the Council in debasing the coin; he had borrowed from foreign Jews at usurious interest; stooped to the meanest acts to raise money, the very lead being stripped from church roofs, and the bells taken from towers and steeples; and all this had raised prices, sapped public morality, and turned men against the Reformation, with which the Protector was identified. The expenses of the court, meanwhile, had risen from £19,000 in 1532, to £100,000 in 1549. The chantry lands, which should have been sold to meet the wants of the State, were passing into the hands of the same parties as had swallowed the abbey lands already. Dishonesty was universal in the public service, all alike contending with each other in the struggle for plunder. The weakness of Government had led to practical anarchy in many counties. Cathedral chapters, country squires, knights, all, indeed, who had the chance, vied in wrecking what remained to the Church. The halls of country mansions were hung with altar-cloths: couches and beds were quilted with copes; men drank their wine out of chalices, and watered their horses in marble coffins. The incapacity and want of principle of those at the head of affairs had led to a social chaos which

was declared by the priests to be the result of leaving Mother Church and taking up with the New Doctrines.

Risings forthwith broke out in different parts, with demands for political reforms,[1] mixed up with a cry for the revival of the Six Articles, the restoration of the mass in Latin, the hanging up of the sacrament for worship; its administration in one kind; the re-introduction of images and holy water, and of prayers for the souls in purgatory; the suppression of the English Bible; and the bringing back of the monks and friars. No heavier indictment could be urged against the old system than such demands. Cornwall and Devon in the west, and Norfolk soon after, rose in revolt, and could only be overcome by the use against them of a force of German mercenaries which Somerset had gathered for a third invasion of Scotland.

Meanwhile, the court had been distracted with wretched plots, which led to the miserable spectacle of Somerset ordering the execution of his brother, Lord Seymour, who was attainted and condemned, as the evil custom was, without a hearing. That he was guilty of crimes thought worthy of death, may,

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[1] There is so striking a similarity between the demands and complaints of the agricultural labourers of the Tudor period (see pp. 109, 225,) and those of the same class at the present day, that I cannot refrain from reproducing the following petition to Parliament from the Hampshire peasantry, September, 1878:—"That your petitioners, seeing that the population of this country has increased to an extent which the limited area of the United Kingdom cannot feed, save by greatly increased cultivation of the soil, do therefore pray that a Bill may be framed giving all cultivable land into the charge of a special representative body, compensating present owners according to taxes they pay; limiting the extent of woods and parks; confining game to aviaries, pens, and closes; abolishing the Game Laws, and removing the unpaid magistrates; officially assessing mansions which are now almost untaxed; breaking up all poor permanent pasture fit for arable, and preventing further grass-sowing for pasture; granting to the farmers the greatest privileges and securities for the highest cultivation, and thus finding abundant remunerative employment for labour as well as cheap food for the people."

however, be judged from the fact that Cranmer signed the warrant for his execution, and from the evidence of Latimer;[1] but the sight of an uncle of the king beheaded and quartered by his brother was none the less demoralizing.

One voice was heard amidst all these confusions, bravely praising the right and condemning the evil in all classes alike —that of Hugh Latimer. From his sermons we may gather a picture of the age which makes one almost wonder that in such a dissolution of all public worth the Evangelical party could do even so much as they did. The idleness of the bishops, the vices of the clergy, the shameful oppression of the poor by the great, the plunder of the Church, and impoverishment of its ministers by the alienation of their incomes to laymen, he denounced with a grand fidelity. What must have been the difficulties in the way of apostolic men like him when he could speak thus?—"Ever since the prelates were made lords and nobles the work of the Gospel plough standeth: there is no work done, the people starve. They hawk, they hunt, they card, they dice: they pastime in their prelacies with gallant gentlemen, with their dancing minions, and their fresh companions, so that preaching is clean gone." "And now I would ask a strange question. Who is the most diligent bishop and prelate in all England, that passes all the rest in doing his office? I can tell, for I know him who it is, I know him well. But now I think I see you listening and hearkening that I should name him. There is one that passes all others, and is the most diligent prelate and preacher in all England. And will ye know who it is? I will tell you: it is the devil. He is the most diligent of all preachers: he is never out of his diocese: he is never out of his cure: ye shall never find him unoccupied; he is ever in his parish: he keeps residence at all times. And his office is to hinder religion, to maintain superstition, to set up idolatry, to maintain all kinds of Popery.

[1] Latimer *saw* writings of his plotting the Protector's death. Sermons, 161.

Where the devil is resident and has his plough going, there, away with books, and up with candles; away with Bibles, and up with beads; away with the light of the Gospel, and up with the light of candles, yea, at noon-day. Where the devil is resident, that he may prevail, up with all superstition and idolatry; censing, painting of images, candles, palms, ashes, holy water, and new service of men's inventing. Down with Christ's cross, up with purgatory pick-purse, up with him, the Popish purgatory, I mean. Away with clothing the naked, the poor, and impotent; up with decking of images, and gay garnishing of stocks and stones; up with men's traditions and laws, and down with God's traditions and His most Holy Word. Let all things be done in Latin: there must be nothing but Latin: even the words 'Remember, man, that thou art ashes, and into ashes thou shalt return,'—which are the words spoken by the minister to the ignorant people when he gives them ashes on Ash Wednesday,—must be spoken in Latin. God's Word may in no wise be translated into English."[1]

What must have been the state of religion in England to make such a sermon possible? Yet it was from this almost bottomless gulf of ignorance, superstition, and corruption, the result of centuries of Popery, that evangelical truth had to rescue the land in the face of the shameless Church plunder, by every party in turn, and of the grossest misgovernment. No wonder if old abuses died hard and slowly. It was at least a good sign that a preacher like Latimer was immensely popular: the crowds that thronged to hear him sometimes crowding on the seats till they broke them down with the weight. But it was no wonder he should have to bewail the depravity and heartlessness on every hand. It was the inevitable result of the great spiritual revolution which had destroyed the past, and had not yet so cleared itself from the wreck as to be justly appreciated. The priest with his pardons for money,

[1] Sermon of the Plough. Preached at St. Paul's, London, Jan., 1548.

his images and relics, had been found a huge imposture, but a better and purer faith had not yet rooted itself in men's hearts. Religion, in the past, had been divorced from morality, for the outward ceremony was religion, apart from the life and spirit. As at the fall of ancient paganism, an interval of moral chaos intervened before Christianity could vindicate its surpassing claims, so, at the fall of Popery, there was for the time a breaking up of the whole social life, from which it took generations for the purer faith which superseded it to restore our country. Nor were other causes of public corruption wanting. The discovery of the New World with its dreams of sudden and boundless wealth: the immense arrivals of the precious metals in Europe from the Spanish conquest; the extension of commerce by the discovery of the sea-route to India; and the intoxication of a new universal activity, helped to break down the natural restraints of morality, so far as it had prevailed.

The fiercely contested subject of the marriage of the clergy was decided in the Protestant sense by an Act passed in December, 1548. But great changes are only slowly effected in the face of ancient prejudice, and it was not till an Act passed in 1571, under Elizabeth, that the question was finally settled.

Bonner had virtually ignored all that had been done since Henry's death, and his conduct set a dangerous example. Rather than use the English Litany and Communion, he seldom appeared at St. Paul's at all, and he retained the old services in its chapels. Heading the clerical discontent of his diocese, he soon managed to divide it into two hostile camps. In some churches the altars were retained; in others, tables were substituted. Communion might be administered in both kinds, but in some places it was celebrated thrice a day, as the mass had been. As far as possible, the Romanists continued the old services under new names, and, as Hooper tells us, "the mass priests, though compelled to discontinue the use of Latin, yet most carefully observed the same tone and manner of chanting as they had been

accustomed to in the Papacy."[1] Insolent and defiant, Bonner affected to despise a commission appointed for his examination, and proving utterly intractable was deprived of his office, since he would not fulfil the conditions on which he had accepted it. His commitment to the Marshalsea followed, and thus both Gardiner and he were silenced till King Edward's death.

The terror of bringing about in England the social uprisings that had accompanied religious changes in Europe had led to harsh measures under Henry, and still clouded the better judgment of the age. Toleration was as yet counted a sin. Anxious for personal freedom of conscience, men fancied themselves bound to deny it to all who differed from them in opinions. To realize at once what is implied in a great principle, is impossible even to its most honest advocates. The spell of the past still held men fast. Bullinger and Calvin thought certain opinions worthy of death as sincerely as Gardiner or Bonner. Apart from alarm for the supposed public danger of a true religious liberty, the taunts against Protestantism, that it protected all forms of heresy, quickened the unwise resolution to try to put them down by the strong hand. A commission, including Cranmer and six bishops, with some clergy and laymen, of whom Cecil, afterwards Lord Burghleigh, was one, summoned before them the most prominent leaders of the strange sects that had latterly sprung up, but they were loath to proceed to extremes, and nearly all were induced to recant and were set free.

One unhappy woman, Joan Bocher, however, refused to yield, though detained in prison for a whole year, in hopes that she would do so. Her offence was that she held some strange notions respecting the incarnation; notions which, at the worst, were mere maggots of the brain. Cranmer and Ridley had tried their best to win her over, but she stood firm, and the Council at last, in 1550, were blind enough to send her to the stake in unconscious violation of the fundamental principle of

[1] Original Letters, 72.

their own religious position—the right of private judgment. Cranmer has been most unjustly blamed in connection with this incident, from a story told by Foxe, in error, of his having obtained the signature of Edward to the warrant, only after long and earnest resistance on the part of the boy-king. But the whole charge falls to the ground when it is known that Edward did not sign the warrant at all, and that it would have been contrary to constitutional custom for him to have done so. It was, in fact, signed by the Council, and the minute of its meeting, which still remains, shows that Cranmer absented himself from it to have no part whatever in the matter.[1]

Court intrigues and cabals tended to increase the confusion, and hinder the growth of a better state of things. Somerset had many enemies. Some wished to supplant him as Protector; some hated him for a tenderness, which endangered their selfish oppression of the peasantry; others for his having put his brother to death; others, still, for his having built a grand palace in the Strand on the site of some bishops' houses and churches, and that in a time of war and plague. The clergy hated him not only as the lay head of the Reformers, but for his having grasped so many of the best manors of the bishops for himself or others. His mistakes in policy, his Scotch wars, his French projects, his debasing the coin of the realm, and the anarchy he had suffered to spread through the country, all helped to overthrow him. The Council, led by his rival, Warwick, hence felt strong enough, in October, 1549, to throw him into the Tower, but he was set free in February, 1550, after being sentenced to a fine of £2,000 a year, and the loss of all his goods and offices. But his influence with the boy-king, his nephew, restored him, at least in outward form, to the court and Council in the April following.

The Reformers had been paralyzed by the fall of the Protector, but once more took courage when he was set free. A

[1] See Notes to Strype's Cranmer, ii. 97. London: 1848.

number of learned Reformers had been invited to England, from the Continent, by Cranmer, and with these he took constant counsel, to the modification of many of his views. In a tract, attributed to him, he now rejected the authority of tradition, however willing to give antiquity respect. In another tract, apparently his, he committed himself to the Protestant doctrine of the sacrament more than ever before. In truth, he was ceaselessly busy in the promotion of evangelical religion through the press.

The Romanists had hoped to have the old services restored on Somerset's downfall, but an order issued after it, to the bishops, in the name of the king and Council, undeceived them. All Popish books of devotion were to be destroyed, that the Common Prayer might come into universal use, and any officials who refused to provide the bread and wine for Communion were to be punished. Still more, an Act of Parliament soon after followed, ordering the destruction of the images already cast out of all the churches and chapels of the country, but hitherto left in dishonourable obscurity.

The Ordination Service as yet remained as in the old days, but was now, also, reformed by a special statute. The five inferior orders of the Romish ministry were abolished; the readers, the sub-deacons, the exorcists, the acolytes, or attendants, and the doorkeepers, and with them, a number of superfluous forms; the use of gloves and sandals, of mitre, ring, and crozier, the anointing with chrism, or holy oil, and the delivery of the chalice and paten as a symbol of power being conferred to offer priestly sacrifice—that is, to celebrate masses for the living and the dead. The imposition of hands of the bishop and clergy, and the gift of a Bible to the newly ordained minister, were alone retained. The three offices of bishop, presbyter, and deacon were further distinguished and defined as they are now understood, and thus the reformed Church stood complete in itself in another vital requirement.

Great as were the changes thus introduced, an extreme party,

still small in number, had unhappily risen, who desired not only a reform of the old but the substitution of a new service, from which all resemblance whatever to the Romish forms should be banished. It would have been better, indeed, if this had been more fully done than it was, for the old forms were identified with a Church drunk with the blood of the saints, and sunk into a mockery of the Church of the Apostles. Unfortunately an opposite course was taken, and Puritanism waked into life. Men like Hooper—thoroughly Protestant and evangelical, but attaching too much importance to indifferent trifles—shrank from the retention of details involving no principle, as from "shreds and fragments of Rome," and began an opposition which became disastrous in the end. There was no idea of opposition to episcopal ordination, or to becoming robes for bishops or clergy, but it shocked the minds of many, and it well might do so, to see a Protestant bishop arrayed in the vestments of Popery.

The difficulty of finding competent scholarship in England, had led Cranmer to look abroad for aid at the universities. Fagius, a great Hebraist, was nominated to the chair of Hebrew at Cambridge, and Bucer to that of theology, but, unfortunately, the one died almost immediately, and the other only lived till 1551. A learned Florentine, Peter Martyr, also, was appointed professor of theology at Oxford. He had been a monk, but having renounced his vows had had to flee from Italy. The introduction of foreign professors was no novelty, for Cambridge had gloried in Erasmus, and foreigners had often been employed, till recent times, by the universities, to prepare the Latin speeches for which the officials were not equal. But the new professor was fiercely attacked for his Protestantism by the Oxford authorities, who had continued bigotedly Romish since the expulsion of the Reforming students, and he was forced to defend the evangelical doctrine of the sacrament against that of the mass, in a dispute of four days, in which, however, he nobly justified his selection for the post he held. Even in Cambridge,

the old dogma was dying hard, for there, also, a fiery debate was held, soon after, on the same inexhaustible subject. Most of the clergy had clung to their early opinions with all the bigotry of ignorance, though nominally accepting the new doctrine, and thus, except in name, the teaching from pulpits and professors' chairs, alike, was still Popish in very many cases.

Among the saintly Fathers of the Reformation none holds a more worthy place than John Hooper. Born in Somersetshire, about 1495, he in due course went to Oxford, and after a time became a Cistercian monk. Study of the Scriptures, however, and intercourse with the early Reformers, before long led him to renounce Popery and embrace evangelical religion. After the Six Articles were passed, his life had been in such danger that he had to escape, in 1537, from England, in disguise, and remain an exile, first in France, and then in Switzerland, till 1547, when he returned, on the accession of Edward VI. His letters when abroad, many of which still remain, show him to have been an earnest student, a tender husband and father, an humble and zealous Christian, a great admirer of the Continental divines, and an uncompromising enemy of everything connected with the Romish system. The simplicity, integrity, and warmth of heart which he breathes, must have endeared him to all his friends, as much as his fearless loyalty to his opinions commanded their respect.

On his return to England, he at once took a foremost place among the Reformers. He found, as he tells us, Cranmer, Ridley, Goodrich of Ely, Ferrar of St. David's, Holbeach of Lincoln, and Barlow of Bath, holding sentiments on the crucial question of the Eucharist, "pure, and religious, and similar to those of Bullinger and the Swiss Churches."[1] But they were not thorough enough for him in carrying out their convictions. "It is only the fear for their property," says he, harshly enough, "that prevents them reforming their Churches according to the

[1] Original Letters, 72.

Word of God." For Cranmer he "desired nothing more than a firm and manly spirit,"—he might have added, "like his own." His energy was sleepless. His public lectures on different Books of Scripture, and his preaching before the court and in the churches, were untiring, and he soon became only less popular than Latimer. At last, in July 1550, he was nominated to the bishopric of Gloucester, but, with his strong views, the vestments still retained from Rome, and the oath required from prelates, compelled his refusal of it. The oath was in fact fairly open to challenge, for it required a promise of obedience "to all statutes made or *to be made* in support of the king's ecclesiastical authority. So help me God, and *all saints*, &c." Cited before Cranmer for declining the episcopate, he carried the day on this point, and the objectionable phrase was omitted. His scrupulosity must have been troublesome enough, for he tells us "he brought forward many objections to it in his public lecture before the king and the nobility," and the matter was only settled after "it had been long and sharply agitated between the bishops and himself." But the vestments were even more objectionable to him than the oath. It was not till Elizabeth's day that the present black satin robe of a bishop superseded that of scarlet silk, which had been used by Rome, and appeared to the more ardent Reformers a symbol of all her cruelties and corruptions. Hooper, therefore, hating Rome as one well might who expected death at the hands of her bishops as soon as they regained the power, stood out strongly against wearing it. His friends, Bucer and Peter Martyr, at Cambridge and Oxford, while wishing it had been different, wisely counselled him to regard it as an immaterial point, for which the peace of the Church should not be disturbed, and reminded him most justly, that if every one's scruples were met no comely order would be possible. It was at once hopeless and unwise, moreover, to attempt to model things in England too closely on the Swiss pattern, and only stirred up discussion and opposition in the Church and nation. But Hooper had the true Puritan narrowness as well as its nobler

qualities, and would listen to nothing, nor did he yield till he had been committed to the Fleet prison for six weeks, after disturbing the Church by a nine months' controversy, impolitic as it was hurtful. Then, at last, he consented to wear the vestments on specified occasions, and was ordained. But he had set on foot the Puritan movement in England, which was, hereafter, to rend the Church for a time in pieces. As a bishop, however, he was a model. Able and diligent in preaching, zealous in promoting the welfare of his diocese, fearless in the exposure of abuses, strict in discipline, careful of the best interests of the Church, grandly loyal to Evangelical Protestantism, and pure and unselfish in an age of general corruption, he has left a name of which the episcopate may well be proud.

Restlessly active, his first suggestion recommended itself to both Cranmer and Ridley. Altars, he said, should be exchanged for tables, everywhere, "that the simple might be turned from the old superstition of the mass, to the right use of the Lord's Supper." An order to this effect had already been made, and Ridley had zealously removed the altars in the London diocese, but the thousands of bigoted Romanists still in the pulpits through the country had, in many cases, delayed compliance. A mandate was therefore issued in November, 1550, requiring conformity to the former decree of the Council. Two bishops, Day of Chichester, and Heath of Worcester, however, still held out, and refusing obedience, were first committed to prison, and then deprived of their mitres.[1] Gardiner also had, at last, been deprived of his bishopric some months before.[2] He was the head of the Romanists, and by his craft and cunning had embarrassed the Government at every turn. On the plea that nothing should be altered in the country during the king's minority, a doctrine which would have suspended legislation for many years, he opposed everything done by the Council or the Parliaments held under them "The enlightening grace

[1] October 10, 1551

[2] March, 1551.

bestowed on the Lord's anointed was not given," he hinted, "till the coronation, and the Council not having it could do nothing." The true motive for his bearing lay in the delicate health of the young king, which promised the accession of Mary at no distant date, and with it the restoration of Popery.

The successor to the see of Winchester was Dr. Ponet, a man of eminent worth and learning, but the conditions on which he had to accept it reveal the difficulties with which the Reformers had to contend. He had to content himself with a pension of 2,000 marks from the episcopal estates, and to alienate the rest in favour of greedy courtiers.[1] The Church had formerly plundered the nation: it was now being plundered, in spite of the Reformers, by those whom it had taught the lesson of unbridled greed. The work before Cranmer and his colleagues, in a time so corrupt, was also made unspeakably harder by the want of agreement in the Church itself, and it was aggravated still more by such disputes as Hooper had excited. "There has hitherto been no agreement among the bishops," says a Cambridge correspondent of Calvin, in 1550, "relative either to doctrine or discipline. Very few parishes are provided with fit ministers, and many of them are set up to sale to the nobility. There are some even of the ecclesiastical orders, and of that class too which desires to be reckoned Evangelical, who hold three or four parishes or more, and yet do not discharge the duties of any *one*, but place there such substitutes as can be hired at the cheapest rate, and frequently men who are unable to read the services in English, and who, in their hearts, are very Papists. The nobility, in many instances, place over the parishes those who formerly belonged to religious houses, to save themselves from paying them the pensions due them, and these men are generally destitute of learning, and utterly unqualified for the ministry. Hence it is, that you may find many a parish in which for many years a sermon has never been heard."[2] "I

[1] Burnet, ii. 165. [2] Calvin, Ep. Op. tom. xix. 58, 59. Edit. Amst.

marvel the ground gapes not and devours us," says Latimer in in one of his sermons. "If the great men in Turkey in their religion of Mahomet should sell benefices, as our patrons sell benefices here, it should be taken as a thing intolerable. The Turk would not suffer it in his commonwealth. Let patrons take heed; they shall answer for all the souls that perish through their default." Bernard Gilpin went even so far as to say, that "if such a monster as Darvellgadern, the Welsh idol, could set his hand to a bill to let the patron take the greater part of the profits, he might have a benefice." Against these dreadful abuses the Reformers were well-nigh powerless and could only protest, and urge others also to do so, as Calvin tells us Cranmer begged him to do by writing frequently to the king respecting them.[1] The worst was that they disgusted the people with the name of Church reform, while they suited the Romanists as much as they were abhorred by the Evangelical party.

The Prayer Book as first issued had seemed in some of its phrases to countenance the belief in the corporal presence of Christ in the Communion, and on this ground and some others had been unsatisfactory to many of the Reformers, both in England and on the Continent. It was therefore revised in 1551, and brought very nearly to its present form; indeed, it was made more thoroughly unsacramentarian than it has ever been since.[2] A younger race of clergy was rising, less affected

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[1] Calvin, Ep. Op. tom. xix. 240. Edit. Amst.

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Prayer Book of 1549:—	Prayer Book of 1552:—	Prayer Book of Elizabeth:—
The *priest* shall first receive the communion in both kinds.	The *minister* shall first receive, &c.	Same as in that of 1552.
And when he delivereth *the sacrament of the body of Christ*, he shall say,—	And when he delivereth *the bread*, he shall say,—	And when he delivereth the bread to *any one*, he shall say,—

by early prejudices than the veteran Reformers, and anxious to make a thorough Reformation from the whole Romish system in all its details, though loyal to episcopacy. They were men of great energy, most of them honest and learned, and they had all the zeal of youth, but, doubtless some of its impetuosity. Cranmer and even Latimer were beginning to be passed in the advance of public opinion, as they in their day had passed those before them, and as all leaders of one generation must be by those of the next.

An explanatory rubric, or note in red type, appended to the Communion Service in the revised Prayer Book gave special offence to the Romish party, by informing the people that

Prayer Book of 1549:—	Prayer Book of 1552:—	Prayer Book of Elizabeth:—
The body of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve thy body and soul to everlasting life.	*Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and feed on Him in thy heart, by faith, with thanksgiving.*	*The body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life. Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and feed on Him in thy heart by faith with thanksgiving.*
And the minister delivering *the sacrament of the blood*, &c.	And the minister that delivereth *the cup*, &c.	
The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for thee, preserve thy body and soul to everlasting life.	*Drink this, in remembrance that Christ's blood was shed for thee, and be thankful.*	*The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life. Drink this, in remembrance that Christ's blood was shed for thee, and be thankful.*

kneeling at the time of receiving the sacrament was merely "an humble and grateful acknowledgment of the benefits of Christ therein given to all worthy receivers, and meant nothing like an adoration of the elements, as unto any corporal presence of Christ's natural Flesh and Blood." It was also a sore point with them that Cranmer fraternized with such men as Peter Martyr, Martin Bucer, and Alexander Aless, and consulted them on Church questions, standing, as they did, outside the Episcopal communion. Sacerdotalism could not tolerate the recognition of any branch of the Church not ruled by bishops. As if any one needs be the less sincere an Episcopalian for not unchurching all but his own section of Christ's people!

The Ten Articles of Henry's time had been superseded by the Six Articles of the reaction, and these, in their turn, had been abolished. Unwilling that the Church should be without a recognized Confession of its Faith, Cranmer now conferred on it one of the greatest of the many services it owes him, by bringing forward a series of Articles, forty-two in number, which, with some retrenchments and modifications, are the Thirty-nine Articles of the present day. He had early adopted the noble conception of Melancthon that a common basis of faith should be drawn up for all the Protestant Churches of Europe, to enable them to present a united front to Rome, and he had been in earnest and wide correspondence with the Reformers of the Continent for many years to bring this about. Attempts had also been made, once and again, to effect it by bringing over learned deputations from Germany for friendly discussion with the dignitaries of the English Church, but the bigotry of Henry VIII., and his political schemes, with the rooted sacerdotalism of many English bishops, had as often defeated his aim.

It seemed, indeed, at one time as if all Protestants might unite, and receive not only the doctrine, but the discipline of the English Church by mutual concessions; nor was it till 1552 that Cranmer gave up the magnificent idea. But it is the characteristic of healthy freedom that it begets differences of thought,

and those of Protestantism prevented any general alliance of the European and English Churches. Identity of opinion is impossible where there is intellectual earnestness. Even in the Church of Rome, to think, is to differ from one's neighbour, and only an outward and unreal uniformity can be maintained, where speculative points are involved.

Finding his great project thus hopeless, Cranmer set himself to prepare new Articles, as has been said, for the Church. He received the order of the king in Council to commence the work, in 1551, and in September of that year the draft was submitted for revision to Sir John Cheke, the king's tutor, and to Secretary Cecil, whom Cranmer often consulted on ecclesiastical matters. It was afterwards revised, further, by the six royal chaplains, and by the Presbyterian John Knox, who was then resident in London. A final revision by Cranmer himself followed. The Articles were now ready, apparently without having been submitted to Convocation, and an order from the king was drawn up, requiring the bishops to cause all their clergy to sign them. But the royal signature was not put to it till May, 1553, a few days before Edward's death. So cautious was the advance in the face of so much bitter opposition. The difficulty of helping forward evangelical religion in a Church still so Popish in its clergy, may indeed be judged from the fact that the new Ordination Service had been carried by the votes of only six bishops against five, sixteen, who were mostly hostile, having kept out of the way. Thus, also, the bill for destroying the images in the churches had only eight bishops for it, while six opposed it, and thirteen were absent.[1] The majority of the episcopal bench were, in fact, still Romanists, though, for policy, they affected to accept the Reformation. Trimming to every ecclesiastical change to retain their sees, they were secretly the deadly enemies of the new order they affected to maintain.

[1] Journals of the House of Lords.

The intrigues and plots which had led to the imprisonment of Somerset in 1550, soon began again after his restoration. England was made to feel bitterly the evils of a royal minority, for a strong will on the throne would at the worst have subjected it to only one tyrant, whereas it was now the prey of rival factions. Early in 1550 the Earl of Warwick, the worthy son of the head extortioner of Henry VII., gained the chief power in the Council, and from that time, though Somerset was in name restored to favour, his fall was only a matter of weeks or months. At last, on the 11th October, 1551, Warwick became Duke of Northumberland, and this crowning triumph was followed on the 16th by the arrest of Somerset once more, on the charge of having conspired against members of the Council—for it could not be said that he conspired against his nephew, the king. His real crime was that he stood in the way of Northumberland's ambition, as the one obstacle between him and supreme control over Edward. A mockery of trial then only too common, soon followed, and the headsman's axe completed the tragedy in January, 1552, not however without public disturbances, and amidst great lamenting among the Reformers. It was felt that he had meant well, and his errors were forgotten in his fate. Every position of influence was henceforth filled by creatures of Northumberland, and the country soon found that in Somerset's fall it had only exchanged one cloud of harpies for a still worse. What the hail had left, the new locusts devoured. A fresh commission was issued to hunt out any bells, plate, images, robes, banners, or whatever was of value in the churches, or that had been taken from them, that they might be sent to London to be turned into money. Whatever remained of the chantry lands was seized and divided among the public robbers at nominal prices. Livings were granted away to Northumberland's friends, in every direction, and in March, 1553, a packed Parliament threw out a bill by which Cranmer and his party sought to check these shameful abuses. Lay impropriations were the

special object of their attack—a system by which court favourites or purchasers in the open market were made nominally deans or rectors, free to appoint whom they liked as their working deputy. But the scandal was an heirloom from the old Popish times, when boys had been made bishops, and even cardinals, when livings and prebends were heaped on men who were not even in deacon's[1] orders; and it was too profitable to be corrected. The Reformers had therefore to submit in this as in much else. So audacious, indeed, did the plundering of endowments become under Northumberland, that, having confiscated to himself the vast estate of the Bishopric of Durham, in 1551, he threw Tunstal into the Tower on vague charges, soon after Somerset's execution, that he might the better enter on the spoil. But he differed only in degree from his fellow-robbers, for appointments either to benefices or bishoprics had come to depend on the willingness of nominees to sign away a large part of the income. The monks, indeed, had led the way, in this as in other iniquities, by their wholesale engrossment of parish endowments, to the wide spiritual ruin of the Church; and the political adventurers of Edward's day only used their chance of continuing the same odious plunder. The morality of Popery—a morality seen yet too widely in Italy and Spain in an utter want of healthy public opinion—was only slowly to be purified by three centuries of Protestantism. Meanwhile this unholy plunder of the Church has left one-third of the benefices of England under the value of £200 a year at this moment: has caused the unspeakable scandal that many of the clergy can taste butcher's meat as rarely as our agricultural labourers, and that many, feeling themselves unable to give their children an education, are glad to apprentice them to any tradesman who will take them.[2] Attempts had been repeatedly made by Cranmer, and Acts had even been

[1] See Drummond's Erasmus, i. 70.

[2] Bishop of Manchester, in *Times*, 1878. The endowment of the Parish Church of Clerkenwell is only £4 18s. 9d. a year!

passed, to reform the body of Church law which had grown into a jungle of pontifical decrees and decretals, Sixtine, Clementine, and other prolixities and confusions, and still ruled in the ecclesiastical courts. He at last succeeded in 1552 in obtaining a royal commission to systematize it, and thus put an end to the unspeakable abuses against which Colet[1] and every sincere reformer had so loudly inveighed. But though the commission did its work, it was never confirmed. Discipline over laymen was felt impossible in a Church in which they had no voice, and inexpedient where the whole nation were invited to membership. Edward saw the difficulties better than Cranmer. He admitted the desirableness of discipline, but felt the need of security that those entrusted with it should be men of "tried honesty, wisdom, and judgment." "But because," added he, "those bishops who should execute it, some for Papistry, some for ignorance, some for age, some for their ill names, some for all these causes, were men unable to execute discipline, it was, therefore, a thing unmeet for such men."

One part indeed of this vast undertaking was of peculiar difficulty, and perhaps caused the wreck of the whole scheme. The laws of Church discipline framed under Rome had been utterly neglected except towards heretics, but they stood on the pages of the Canonists, and would become formidable when transferred even in a modified form to the Reformed Church. Cranmer's gentleness made him more tolerant in some directions than many of his contemporaries, but if we remember that even Jeremy Taylor,[2] nearly a hundred years later,[3] thought death the just punishment of opinions which "taught blasphemy or impiety," and that even Bullinger and Melancthon went perhaps further, it is no wonder Cranmer

[1] See pages 109, 121.

[2] Born 1613, died 1667.

[3] In his Liberty of Prophesying, published in 1647, sec. xiii. 1, sec. xv. 2.

held that "heretics" deserved banishment or imprisonment, or to be punished in any other way that seemed most expedient for their conversion, though the germ of toleration had already led him to repudiate the penalty of death for opinions.

Even Church censures in such an age, however, when licence was holding its carnival, must have been distasteful in the extreme, and hence, for better or worse, the Church of England has been left practically without a system of discipline. The higher tone of morality gradually introduced by Protestantism has, however, vindicated itself triumphantly in the fact that, without Church penalties or altar denunciations, no country can boast a healthier public opinion, or a purer national life, than England. Morality began to grow among us from the day that the priest was put down.

The young king had been attacked by small-pox in 1552, and the disease had sorely tried a constitution already tainted. Winter saw him still further enfeebled by signs of decline, and it was clear before June that he was dying. His greatest fear, as a fervent Protestant, was that "Papistry" should rise again through his sister Mary. This alarm was fostered by Northumberland for his own ends. Having married his son to Lady Jane Grey, daughter of the Duke of Suffolk and granddaughter of Mary Brandon, sister of Henry VIII., the duke worked on Edward's fears till he induced him to draw up a will leaving the kingdom, as if it had been his private property, to this lady, whose only claim, in reality, was her being a Protestant. The Council all signed this document: the judges and legal advisers of the crown were said to support it, and even Cranmer, after a long resistance, yielded at last, most unwillingly, to the importunities of the dying boy, and added his name to it. On the 6th July, 1553, Edward was dead and the will remained an idle invention of Northumberland's ambition, destined to bring ruin on not a few.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE EVIL DAYS OF QUEEN MARY.

THE state of religious affairs in England at the death of Edward, is vividly painted in some of the letters of the Reformers which still remain. "The most goodly Josiah, our earthly Hope," says one,[1] "died on the 6th of July (1553); of consumption, as the physicians assert; by poison, according to common report." Undoubtedly he died of natural decay, but the fears of men suspected murder. "This death, and the other evils which now oppress England," continues the writer, "were apparently portended by a dreadful storm, to which I do not remember any equal. It was accompanied by the most extreme darkness, most violent wind, innumerable flashes of lightning, and dreadful rain." So, he read the skies by his own foreboding. Northumberland's attempt to get his daughter-in-law, Lady Jane Grey, made queen, and its failure, are then related, and the letter goes on :—

"Thus Jane was queen for only nine days, and those most turbulent ones. After some days Mary made her entry with great triumph into the City, to take possession of the Tower, on entering which she immediately set at liberty the Bishop of Winchester (Gardiner), the Duke of Norfolk, imprisoned since

[1] Julius Terentianus. Orig. Letters, 365. Date, Nov. 20, 1553. He had already fled from England to Strasburg.

1547; Lord Courtenay, son of the Marquis of Exeter, beheaded in 1539; and the widow of the Duke of Somerset, the late Protector. The Bishop of Winchester and the Duke of Norfolk were forthwith made councillors." Thus the lay and priestly heads of Romanism were once more at the helm of the State. Mary had entered London on the 3rd of August, and on the 22nd Northumberland was beheaded at Tower Hill, professing at the block that, though outwardly so ardent a Reformer, he had always been a steadfast believer in the old religion—a type, doubtless, in this of many others who took the side that promised to bring them Church plunder.

Mary had been persuaded to let King Edward be buried by Cranmer with the English service, but she had a requiem mass sung for him in Latin, before her, in the Tower, the same day, Gardiner performing it in the old Popish form, wearing his mitre.[1] Ridley, Bishop of London, had preached on the 16th of July, at Paul's Cross, in favour of Jane, and Sandys, the Vice-Chancellor, had done so on the same day at Cambridge, but Mary had no sooner returned to the Tower than both were thrown into prison, where Ridley lay till he was martyred. Sandys, however, was soon released, and lived abroad, to become afterwards Archbishop of York, under Elizabeth.

Nine days after her triumphant entry to London Mary sent for the Lord Mayor and Aldermen to the Tower, and assured them that "albeit her own conscience was stayed in matters of religion, yet she meant not to compel or strain men's consciences otherwise than God should, as she trusted, put in their hearts a persuasion of the truth that she was in, through the opening of His word unto them by godly, and virtuous, and learned preachers." How she kept her word is shown by the terrible epithet that for ever swathes her name!

Bonner was reinstated as Bishop of London on August 5th, and inaugurated his restoration as might have been

[1] Strype's Mem. iii. 1, 31.

expected. Bourn, his chaplain, "a most thorough Papist," was appointed preacher at Paul's Cross on Sunday, August 13th, and a great crowd gathered to hear what he might say. "As soon as they heard his blasphemies and falsehoods, praising Bonner, denouncing the late king, and favouring Popery, they began to raise a tumult; some of them demanding capital punishment for the man, and others calling out for silence. The Lord Mayor and some of the Aldermen endeavoured to quiet them but without effect." Bradford, the future martyr, then a prebendary of St. Paul's, who stood in the pulpit behind him, on this came forward, and addressed the people so judiciously, that, after cheering him, "they promised silence, because he was a faithful preacher of the Word, and presently began quietly to disperse, when he had ended. Some one in the meantime hurled a dagger at the Romish preacher, and the mob became so excited, that it would have been all over with that wicked knave" had not Bradford, and Rogers, another prebendary and also a future martyr, spread their cloaks over him, and led him safely through the mob.

The spirit of the new reign could not be concealed. In spite of his brave rescue of the preacher, Bradford was thrown next day into the Tower, "upon no other charge than that, as he could so easily disperse the mob, he must have had some hand in exciting it." Other preachers were also arrested, and occasion was taken to prohibit all preaching, except by license, which was given only to known Romanists. Many of the Protestants, however, would not be thus silenced, and were in consequence imprisoned; a step which marked the beginning of the persecution. The Romish preachers had to be protected by the queen's guard, in London, and all persons were prohibited from coming near Paul's Cross, for fear of raising a fresh disturbance.

As early as the 27th of August, Bonner restored the old service in St. Paul's, with its processions of priests and its Latin mass, and London once more heard the choristers singing

anthems from its steeple on St. Catherine's day. It was the same in the country. A letter from Oxford tells us, "The Papists, who had been always longing for this most wished-for day, dug out, as it were from their graves, their vestments, chalices, and portasses,[1] and began mass with all speed. In these things our Oxford folk led the van. Even at the proclamation of Mary here, before she was proclaimed at London, and when the event was still doubtful, they gave such demonstrations of joy as to spare nothing. They first of all made so much noise all the day long with clapping their hands, that it seems still to linger in my ears; they then, even the poorest of them, made voluntary subscriptions, and mutually exhorted each other to maintain the cause of Mary; lastly, at night, they had a public festival, and threatened flames, hanging, the gallows, and drowning, to all the Gospellers."[2]

Bishop Hooper was thrown into the Fleet prison on the 1st September, and two days after wrote to Bullinger that "the altars are again set up throughout the kingdom; private masses are frequently celebrated in many places; the true worship of God, true invocation, and the right use of the sacraments, are all done away with. All godly preachers are placed in the greatest danger; those who have not yet known by experience the filthiness of a prison are looking hourly for it."[3]

Churches and communities of Continental Protestants had been sanctioned by Edward, for foreigners resident in various parts, and many of the learned European Reformers, invited to England by Cranmer, were still in the country. Among these, also, the greatest alarm now spread. Peter Martyr,[4] the professor of theology at Oxford, an Italian, and formerly an Augustine monk, was now forbidden to leave his house, and was only rescued by the zealous action of some devoted friends. At first, indeed, he was only allowed to come to London to

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[1] Breviaries—mass-books.

[2] Orig. Letters, 369.

[3] Orig. Letters, 100.

[4] Born at Florence in 1500, died 1562.

plead his cause before the Council, but a pardon was soon after granted him, for in reality he had done nothing. His meeting with Cranmer gives us a glimpse of these old days, and of both men. "Master Peter came to London and called upon the Archbishop of Canterbury, his ancient and most revered host. Who can express how welcome he was? Cranmer had so earnestly wished for his coming that he had often importuned the Council to that effect, and had offered to give all his property as a security, if they had any fear of Master Peter's running away."

"When Master Peter arrived, Canterbury told him he had caused bills to be posted all over London, in which he offered to prove that the doctrine received in the time of Edward VI. was sound, agreeable to Scripture, the same as that of the primitive Church, and approved by the authority of the ancient fathers, if only they would allow Peter Martyr and one or two others to be his colleagues. The Popish preachers when they saw that many of our priests were already cast into prison, and that others had fled, made a great boast about disputing with us. But when the placards of the archbishop were posted up they began to change their note, and said that no disputation should take place. The spirits of the Gospellers were, however, so strengthened by the bills that they no longer hesitated to lay down their lives for the truth, but their enemies were so exasperated by them that they instantly brought a new charge of treason against the Archbishop, and cited him into court."[1]

Cranmer and Latimer were, therefore, both summoned before the Council on September 13th, and Latimer that night, Cranmer the night following, found themselves in the Tower. Ridley and Hooper were imprisoned already, and Miles Coverdale, Bishop of Exeter, and Barlow, of Bath and Wells, were now added to their number. Proceedings were ordered against the Archbishop of York; Ponet of Winchester, and

[1] Orig. Letters, 371.

Scory of Chichester, with the bishops of St. David's, Chester, and Bristol, were deprived of their sees, and the bishops of Ely, Lincoln, and Hereford removed from Parliament. Fifteen of the Reforming bishops were thus, at a stroke, turned out, so as not to hinder the Popish reaction. Their having been married was the offence alleged against most. Sixteen new bishops were presently consecrated from the thorough-going Romanist faction.

Parliament met in October, and Convocation sat at the same time. The counter-revolution now ran fast to its triumph. The laws passed in Edward's reign affecting religion were repealed by a majority of three hundred and fifty,[1] after a keen discussion of eight days in the House of Commons, and it was enacted that from the 20th of next December, there should be no other form of divine service but that used in the last year of Henry VIII.[2] Convocation had the subject of transubstantiation once more before it, and after strenuous resistance on the part of six of the dignified clergy, but with none from any besides, the Popish doctrine was once more declared the truth. No wonder that the Reformation should have had such a struggle, where the pulpit was thus shown to have been held throughout by secret Romanists. All the Old Party, bishops and others, deprived in the past, were restored. The married clergy were required either to put away their wives or resign their benefices; no fewer than twelve thousand, according to Archbishop Parker, being ejected on this ground alone. The bloody Six Articles were revived in all their horror. The mass was henceforth once more restored throughout England. The Protestant students at Oxford were either ejected or left. Nor was this all. The fire of a very real purgatory was rekindled in the land to try every man's sincerity. Meetings of more than twelve persons, to attempt any alteration of religion, were declared felony, and those of a smaller number were made punishable by a year's

[1] The minority was 80.

[2] Burnet, ii. 395.

imprisonment. Negotiations were also begun for a national reconciliation with Rome, and Cardinal Pole was commissioned by the Pope, as legate, to bring it about.

Meanwhile, Mary had been crowned on the 1st October, with due pomp, by Gardiner, now Lord Chancellor, in keeping with a design to restore the old system of priest-statesmen, from which Henry had broken off after the death of Wolsey. The enemy of the Reformation had thus the ear of the crown, and had become the first officer of the law. But another calamity was impending to the cause of religious liberty. The Emperor Charles had resolved to marry his son Philip to Mary, and she was only too willing to take him. The dream of her grandfather Ferdinand to unite all Western Europe under branches of the Spanish house had passed to her through her mother. The line of Charles V. held not only the imperial crown, but the splendid inheritance of Aragon, Naples, Burgundy, Castile, and the New World. His brother Ferdinand ruled the Austrian Duchies, Bohemia, and Hungary. If Mary were married to Charles's son Philip, England, also, would become Spanish, and the one family would dominate nearly all Christendom.

Another, and even stronger impulse, moreover, led her to meditate this alliance. She believed, to use her own words at a later period, that "she had been predestined and preserved by God to the succession of the crown, for no other end save that He might make use of her, above all else, in the bringing back of the realm to the Catholic faith," and she could hope for no such efficient help in doing so as a marriage with the representative of ultra-Catholic ideas. She was now thirty-seven, and had no personal attractions. Short in person, with brow projecting a-top, a face pale and drawn by confirmed ill health, a thin bust, contrasting with symptoms, below, of the dropsy, which was already in her system, it seemed improbable that she could induce Philip, who was ten years younger, and had already been twice a widower, to accept her. But Charles favoured the proposal, and Philip, guiltless alike of heart and ability, but

ambitious as a king, and bigoted as a Romanist, submitted himself passively to his father's wishes.

Nothing could have been more distasteful to the nation. Protestants saw in it the re-establishment of Romanism, with its worst horrors of revenge and persecution, as they now reigned in the Low Countries under Charles: the conservative feeling of the country shrank from an alliance which would undo the work of Henry, and make England once more subject to the Pope; and all, alike, revolted from a step by which it was universally assumed that England would be degraded into a mere appanage of Spain. Even the plunder of the Church lands had united forty thousand families who had shared in the spoils, against any proposal, which, by bringing back submission to the Papacy, might strip them of their new possessions.

Whatever opposition there may have been to the course already introduced of ignoring the Protectorate, and undoing all the changes made under it, there was no common feeling to make it formidable; while the abuses committed in Edward's name by the successive factions of Somerset and Northumberland, had prejudiced the general mind against even the good that had been effected. The Protestant bishops had been deprived, or arrested, and Bonner and Gardiner restored to honour. Latimer, as the most eminent among the Protestants, had been sent to the Tower. Cranmer had been tried with Lady Jane Grey, her husband, and his two brothers, for high treason, and, having pleaded guilty, lay exposed to a capital sentence, which was not carried out at once, only because he had received the pallium from Rome, and must be first degraded from his priesthood: for Mary was too devout a Papist to touch a pontifical archbishop till his ordination was formally cancelled. The foreign congregations were shortly to to be ordered to leave the realm,[1] images had been replaced in many churches, and Romanism with all its characteristics re-

[1] Feb., 1554.

introduced, without raising any popular movement. The successive public deaths of the two uncles of King Edward, as criminals; the plunder of what remained to the Church after Henry's gigantic spoliations—plunder which had stripped every see of half its lands, and suppressed that of Durham entirely; which had shorn the chantries and guilds of their endowments, and seemed ready to swallow up all that were left in any other form, had shocked the public morality, low though it was.

The crown also had suffered in the disastrous minority, from the same incapacity and greed. The friends of Somerset and Warwick had had its lands granted to them, to the value of five millions of our money, and the coinage had been debased to the utmost, to attempt by gross fraud to stave off the bankruptcy brought about by official extravagance. Church plate, and even the gold and silver on the bindings of books, had been melted down, to mix with worthless alloy and be palmed off as money. Prices had risen as the value of the coin fell, and riots had broken out in many places on this account. The religious reforms enacted, admirable in themselves, had been prejudiced in the eyes of the mass as the gift of politicians so shameless and incompetent. Somerset had already found it necessary to employ Italian and German mercenaries to put down risings which threatened another Pilgrimage of Grace, and Northumberland had had to pack the House of Commons, by the most unblushing stretch of prerogative, to carry a majority for his schemes. Men bore with much, in the belief that Edward would erelong undo the misrule of his minority, and though his death blasted this hope, they transferred their expectations to his sister Mary.

As long, therefore, as Mary only undid the work of the Protectorate, there was no active resistance. But when she threatened the new religious liberties of the nation, and, above all, when its civil liberty, also, seemed endangered, Parliament showed the roused feelings of the nation by the most vigorous watchfulness and opposition. It had passed the reactionary

religious bills only after an eight days' discussion, and even then had shown a strong minority against them.[1] Nor would they have been passed at all, had not Gardiner bribed the leading members by pensions, some of £200, some of £100 a year, for their votes,[2] and created a party for them in the country, by giving in bribes a sum of four hundred thousand pounds, sent by the emperor for the purpose. If the House had removed the stain of illegitimacy from the queen, it had also repealed all the new treasons and felonies created under Henry and Edward, and protected England against danger from the Spanish marriage, by very stringent provisions. Cromwell's system of referring all questions to Parliament had awakened a passion for independence—the secret design, assuredly, of so clear-headed a statesman; as his Church polity, however ambiguous for the time, was hereafter to lay the axe at the root of the Tudor despotism in religion.

No longer servile as in the days of Henry, Parliament therefore, like the nation, set its face against the Spanish marriage, and, to Mary's amazement, sent a request by a deputation, that she should marry an Englishman; but her pale face flushed as she told them, with her man-like voice, that "the House had taken too much on itself, and that she would take counsel on such a matter with God, and with none other."

The queen's determination, thus universally distasteful, coming as it did after so much that was ominous, was felt by the Protestants to mean the return of Romanism and persecution. A widespread rebellion was soon planned, with the secret object of setting Lady Jane Grey on the throne, or, perhaps, Elizabeth. It was to break out simultaneously in the West, in the Midland counties, and in Kent, but only the last proved formidable. Sir Thomas Wyatt, followed by thousands who believed that the Spaniards were coming to take England, marched on London, and would apparently have been successful, had

[1] Note, page 441. [2] Burnet. Abridgment by himself, 315.

they been led on more quickly. As it was, Mary won over the City authorities, by promising not to marry without the assent of Parliament. The City gate at London Bridge was closed; the Kentish men, after wreaking their hatred on Gardiner by sacking his palace, had to march round by Kingston, and only a few reached London at last, wearied and disorganized, to be ignominiously scattered, with the loss of their leader.

This rising proved fatal to Lady Jane Grey and her husband, as well as to the immediate actors. The Duke of Suffolk, the head of her family, and her uncle, Sir Thomas Grey, also, perished, and Sir Thomas Wyatt was executed on the 11th of April. Mary's Tudor fury had been thoroughly roused, and vented itself in ferocious severity. Londoners were shocked by seeing eighty or a hundred bodies dangling from gibbets in all parts of the town, and executions followed elsewhere so numerously, and for so long a time, that remonstrances were at last made by some round her respecting them. One of the leaders, Sir Nicholas Throckmorton, having been acquitted by the jury who tried him, they were thrown into prison, till next spring, and only released on paying the monstrous fine of £2,000, equal now to twelve times that amount.

In April, Parliament, which had been summoned by Gardiner at Oxford, as the Romish head-quarters, reluctantly sanctioned the queen's marriage, and on the 25th of July she was married to Philip, at Southampton, but not without bitter quarrels between his followers and the English. Meanwhile, as far back as March, Cranmer, Latimer, and Ridley, had been removed from the Tower and sent to Oxford, far from Protestant London. There, on the 28th of April, a public disputation on the mass was held, under the presidency of the Dean of Windsor, soon after found guilty of adultery; but they were borne down by the clamour of their adversaries, and being pronounced "obstinate heretics," on refusing to conform, were sentenced to death as such. All three bore themselves bravely. Cranmer appealed "from their judgment and sentence

to the just judgment of Almighty God, trusting to be present with Him in heaven, for whose presence on the altar he was thus condemned." Ridley told his judges that the sentence would only send them the sooner to the place to which they wished to go, and Latimer "thanked God that his life had been prolonged that he might glorify God by this kind of death."

But Mary and Gardiner sought still higher game. Both were determined that, if possible, Elizabeth should not succeed to the throne, and would fain have sent her to the block. As it was she was sent to the Tower, and nothing saved her but the temper of the people, whose threatening attitude made her be released before long, and sent off to gentler detention at Woodstock. Unable to strike in this direction, Gardiner turned more fiercely than ever on the Reformers. Hooper, Ferrar, Coverdale, Philpot, Taylor, and Sandars, were ordered to attend a disputation at Cambridge, similar to that at which Cranmer and his companions had been hooted down at Oxford. But for the moment the plot miscarried, for they refused to dispute in a court in which they were prisoners.

Philip had entered London on the 18th August, 1554, with abundant outward pomp, but not less popular hatred. His luggage was plundered, and the property could neither be recovered, nor could the thieves be found out. The servants of Alva and the other lords were insulted in the streets, and the friars who came with them were advised to put off their gowns for fear of popular vengeance. London had had enough of monks, and hated the very sight of them. Gardiner showed his real opinions by an ominous sign on the entrance day. On one of the decorations in Gracechurch Street, Henry was painted giving a book to Prince Edward; the words *Verbum Dei*[1] showing that it was the Bible. A summons forthwith brought the artist to the chancellor's presence, and after being denounced as a "knave, traitor, and heretic," he was made to blot out the Bible and put a pair of gloves in its stead.[2]

[1] Word of God.

[2] Foxe, vi. 558.

The intense dissatisfaction in London was increased by a set of questions drawn up by Bonner in September for the clergy of his diocese. Examiners were appointed for each parish to inquire whether the minister was, or ever had been married, and whether if married and separated from his wife he still visited her secretly; whether his sermons were orthodox; whether he duly exhorted his people to attend mass and confession; whether he associated with heretics, or had associated with them; and even what dress he wore. Such an inquisition was widely resented, and so great an excitement rose that Bonner was forced by the Council to recall his invidious order. Jealousy of the crown and of Gardiner had quickened the suspicion of all men.

Parliament met in November, and was opened by Gardiner as Lord Chancellor. The great work of handing back England to the Pope was to be undertaken and was erelong carried out. A promise made in an official circular "that no alteration was intended of any man's possessions," removed one great motive for resisting change. At the elections, the voters were admonished to choose "such as were of a wise, grave, and Catholic sort," and the instinctive loyalty of Englishmen responded as the queen wished. The remembrance of the evil days of the Protectorate was still only too fresh; and it was, moreover, a characteristic of the times to obey the directions of the crown till they became intolerable.

The attainder of Pole, the new legate, was reversed without trouble by both Houses, and then came the great question of the repeal of all the Acts passed by Henry or Edward prejudicial to the claims of the Pope. As time, however, would be needed for this, Pole was content to receive a promise that they should be repealed, and this was passed in the Commons with two dissentients in a House of three hundred and sixty members, while in the Lords no opposition was offered.[1] At last, on the 5th

[1] Nov. 29, 1554.

January, 1555, the momentous counter-revolution was completed, and all that Henry had gained for England was swept away at one stroke. The list of acts repealed is the strongest condemnation of their being cancelled. Among them were the act against obtaining dispensations from Rome for pluralities and non-residence; the act that no one shall be cited out of his or her own diocese; the acts against appeals to Rome; against the payments of annates and first-fruits to the Pope; the act of royal supremacy; the act against exactions by the See of Rome, and ten others. The honour and good of England were thus sacrificed without scruple. But the pecuniary interests of all who had shared the plunder of the Church were carefully guarded by special legislation. Even the statute of Mortmain, the legacy of ten generations of English kings, was given up. Yet, happily, manhood enough was left to resist the demand for the repeal of the statute of Premunire, and to limit the restored authority of the bishops to matters of opinion, retaining in all else the supremacy of the civil courts, so that even in the hour of its triumph, Rome had to feel that its victory was only partial.

Accustomed as we are, nowadays, to hear Protestantism blamed for all the abuses surviving in our Church, or recently removed, it is of great value to note in the very headings of the acts which Rome managed to get cancelled, that these abuses are not the growth of Protestantism, but a baleful legacy, in every case, from the pre-Reformation Church. Pluralities and non-residence; the sale of livings; the abuses of ecclesiastical courts, and whatever else has grieved the heart of Evangelical Protestants in the past, or grieves it now, are only pestilent remnants of the old corruptions, once universal, of which the Popes were the defenders and patrons, and in the use of which they were the worst and most scandalous of all offenders. Nor is it too much to say so deliberately; the history of England and its statute-books prove it. Under Rome the Church of England was leprous from head to foot as Gehazi; under Protestantism, there is at most, here and there, a speck of the old

foulness still uneradicated, but destined, thank God, to be rooted out some day!

The repeal of the religious Acts of Henry's reign had been fitly preluded by another triumph in every way worthy of the Romish cause. Cranmer had obtained, under Edward, the repeal of the old statutes against heretics, and the limitation of punishment for religious opinions within very narrow bounds. But fire and gibbet were once more to be commissioned as divine appointments for the conversion of England, for Gardiner, on the 15th December, 1554, had the joy of seeing the old statutes for burning Lollards, and for harrying all whom he and his brethren might call heretics, restored in all their ferocity. Longing to wreak vengeance on evangelical religion, he had now the opportunity, for all Protestants were once more at his mercy and that of his party.

A fortnight before, on the 30th November, a notable ceremony had taken place. High mass had that morning been sung in Westminster Abbey, attended by Philip, the awful Alva, and six hundred Spanish nobles and gentlemen in Philip's train. England was represented by a splendid throng of dignitaries and citizens, lay and clerical, in their robes and bravery, crowding the Abbey. In the afternoon Westminster Hall was thronged by a still more famous gathering. Mary, Philip, and the legate, sat aloft on a platform, the bishops and lay peers ranged at their feet, the Commons and spectators crowding the outer space. In the twilight Gardiner rose, and, bowing to the king and queen, announced that the Lords and Commons had seen their error in having swerved from obedience to the See Apostolic, and humbly craved forgiveness, and reunion with Rome. In their name, and with their renewed assent, he then read aloud an humble petition to Mary and her husband declaring that the Lords spiritual and temporal, and the Commons, representing the whole realm of England, in their own names particularly, and also in that of all England, made most humble suit to their majesties, to intercede for them to "the Most Reverend Father in God the

Lord Cardinal Pole, legate, sent specially hither by our Most Holy Father Pope Julius III., and the See Apostolic of Rome." They declared themselves very sorry and repentant for the schism and disobedience of the past, for making any laws against the supremacy of Rome, or otherwise impugning it, and promised to show their sincerity by repealing all offensive statutes. They "most humbly besought their Majesties, as persons undefiled in the offences" of England or the Parliament, "towards the Holy See, so to set their most humble suit, that they might obtain from the See Apostolic, by the Most Reverend Father, the legate, as well particularly as universally, absolution, release, and discharge, from all danger of such censures and sentences as by the laws of the Church they had fallen into, and that they might, as repentant children, be received into the bosom and unity of Christ's Church, so that this noble realm, with all its members, might in unity with the See Apostolic and Pope for the time being, and in perfect obedience to them, serve God and their majesties to the furtherance and advancement of His honour and glory."[1]

Philip and Mary, having taken this petition, forthwith did their part by asking the legate's pity for the penitents, and then, dropping on their knees, the whole assembly followed their example, and Pole had the supreme delight of reading a solemn form of Absolution, purging England from its heresy and schism, and restoring it "into the unity of Our Mother, the Holy Church." England, prostrate in the persons of its bishops, nobles, and Commons, before a priest, had once more become professedly Romish. The men—bishops, peers, and knights of the shire—who had stripped the Pope of all power in England, and denounced his supremacy over the Church, had gone on their knees to ask his pardon, though careful to keep the fat Church lands, and the rich tithes they had gained in the general scramble for Church plunder; and so eager had

[1] Foxe, vi 572.

the Pope been to regain his sway, that he had consented to wink at their sacrilege, for the sake of their outward allegiance. But the spoiling of the Church did not immediately affect Rome, however cruel might be the disappointment of the clergy at the loss of their endowments.

With the opening of the new year, 1555, the counter-revolution inaugurated its triumph befittingly. The new Romish era was opened by a procession through the streets of London of a hundred and sixty priests, wearing copes, and "singing litanies very lustily:" ninety crosses being carried aloft among them, while eight bishops marched behind; Bonner, carrying the host under a grand canopy, closing the long array. The clergy were ordered to be called together in every diocese, to make confession of their offences against the Pope, and receive his absolution through the legate. The laity were then to be invited to follow their example, all who had not done so before Easter being threatened with the utmost rigour of the law. The bishops once more sat in their own courts, with all their old terrors, and every man's life was thus at their mercy, for not to be entered on the lists as having conformed was taken as a proof of guilt.

Visitations of each diocese were forthwith commenced, to carry out this new Inquisition. Bonner particularly signalized himself by his zeal, breaking out into the foulest language, and even striking his clergy, if the bells were not rung when he came near any church, or if he did not find the wafer exposed for worship, in Romish fashion.[1] Gardiner, at the head of the Government, urged all the bishops to the utmost severity, telling them especially to make public examples of the preachers, to crush whom, he maintained, would be followed by the conversion of the people.

Nor were the Protestants passive. Mary found offensive bills and pamphlets strewed even in the palace, and Gardiner

[1] Burnet, 322.

was infuriated by the reprinting of his book on "True Obedience," in which he had denounced the marriage of Mary's mother as incestuous, and impugned the Papal supremacy. He could only answer that Peter had denied his master, but it was retorted that Peter's denial was that of a moment, while his had lasted twenty-four years. Ballads and pamphlets, stinging the promoters of the apostacy, and ridiculing the revived mummeries, appeared on every hand. Mary and the bishops alike thirsted for vengeance.

After some preliminary raids against Protestant congregations, in town and country, the first Auto da Fe of restored Popery was resolved upon. At the end of January, Prebendary Rogers, Bishop Hooper, Dr. Taylor, rector of Hadleigh, Prebendary Bradford, and seven more, were brought before Gardiner and other bishops specially commissioned to extirpate heresy, and on their refusing to acknowledge the Pope, and return to the Romish Church, were remanded to prison till the next day. Hooper, Rogers, Saunders, once a Coventry clergyman but now a London rector, and Dr. Taylor, were then once more brought up, and condemned to the fire as obstinate heretics, the sentence to be carried out at the places where each had ministered.

Rogers has been mentioned already as a Cambridge student, afterwards English chaplain at Antwerp, where he had helped Tyndale and Coverdale in the translation of the Scriptures into English, and by editing the edition known as Matthew's Bible. Passing on to Wittenberg, the centre of Lutheranism, he had taken charge of a congregation there for many years, till, in Edward's reign, he returned to England. Ridley then made him a prebend of St. Paul's, and the dean and chapter appointed him one of their special preachers. Such a man could not fail to draw on himself the hatred of Gardiner and Bonner. He was arrested soon after Mary's accession, and after being confined for a time to his own house, had been

thrown into Newgate more than a year before his condemnation. He had a wife and eleven children, and might have fled to the Continent before his committal to prison, but he disdained to do so, choosing rather to stand stoutly in defence of the faith of Christ. Condemned on the 29th January for believing aright that the Church of Rome is the Church of Antichrist, and for denying that the wafer in the Sacrament is God, he was roused on the 4th February by the wife of the keeper of Newgate from a sound sleep, with the warning to prepare at once for the fire. Bonner was in waiting to degrade him, and refused his request to talk a few words with his wife before his burning. Having been handed over to the sheriffs, he was led to Smithfield, repeating the Psalm, "Have mercy upon me, O God,"[1] all the way, "all the people wonderfully rejoicing at his constancy, with great praises and thanks to God for the same." His wife and children, eleven in number, "ten of them able to go, and one at the breast," met him by the way, but nothing could move him from fidelity to his conscience. A pardon brought to the stake, on condition of his recanting, had as little effect. The fire was presently kindled, near the spot where the martyrs' memorial in Smithfield now stands, but he seemed to take no heed of it, "washing his hands in the flames, as if they had been cold water," and thus he passed away to his crown.

On the same day, Lawrence Saunders, rector of All Hallows, London, also a married man, was sent off from Newgate to Coventry to die there, that his burning might awe the Protestants of the Midland Counties. It took three days to reach the town, where, having been lodged over-night in the common gaol, he was next morning brought to a field outside the houses, to die. Having kneeled at the stake and prayed, he rose, and clasping it in his arms, kissed it, with the words—"Welcome the cross of Christ! Welcome

[1] Psalm li.

everlasting life," and, so, fire being set to the faggots, he fell asleep.

Bishop Hooper's death was appointed for Gloucester, in his own diocese. He had lain in prison since September 1, 1553—a year and a half—with no bed but "a little pad of straw, a rotten covering, and a tick with a few feathers in it, till by God's means, good people sent him bedding to lie on." "The town ditch on the one side, and the sink and filth of all the house on the other, had infected him with various diseases."[1] Still his brave heart bore up, for he had long anticipated his death at the hands of Bonner, having even chosen his arms as bishop with a premonition of martyrdom, for they showed a lamb in a fiery bush, with sunbeams from heaven descending on it. He was degraded from the priesthood by Bonner at the same time as Rogers, on the 4th February, and was at once sent off to Gloucester, to his great joy, for he wished to die among his own people, and on hearing the news instantly sent for his boots, spurs, and cloak, to be ready to start. Seven thousand people gathered to see his end. Being a tall man, and standing besides on a raised step at the stake, he was seen far and near by the weeping and sorrowful people. Piles of light reeds having been put round him, he lifted two bundles of them, and having kissed them, put one under each arm, and showed how the rest should be laid. Unfortunately, the faggots put above the reeds were green, and would not burn freely, and dry faggots and new reeds had to be brought to rekindle the fire. Meanwhile the martyr stood in the midst of the slow agony praying, "For God's sake, good people, let me have more fire!"—for his limbs were burning, while his body was almost untouched. But a third fire had to be kindled. A bladder of gunpowder had been put between his legs, and another under each arm, yet even when they exploded they did not kill him, for a strong wind seemed to blow aside the flame. Men heard him praying from the

[1] Original Letters, 102.

midst of the fire for some time, and when he could not speak he beat with his hands on his breast, till, after unspeakable agony, his strength at last failed, and he fell forward on the iron ring round his waist and died, after being more than three-quarters of an hour in the fire. So passed away one of the most apostolic men of the age: a bishop who in an age of almost universal covetousness not only lived simply but gave away most of his income: a preacher, famous next to Latimer.

Dr. Rowland Taylor had been condemned with the other three. He was "a doctor both of the civil and canon law, and a right perfect divine:" one of Ridley's converts, and worthy of such a teacher. As rector of Hadleigh, in Suffolk, he realized Chaucer's ideal of the good parson, and Bishop Heber well says, that "there is nothing more beautiful in the whole beautiful Book of Martyrs than the account which Foxe has given of him. His warmth of heart, his simplicity of manners, his touching humility, his zeal in all the holy duties of his office, no less than his courage in death, and the grand cheerfulness with which he met it, have made his memory fragrant for evermore." He had been summoned before Gardiner in 1553, for resisting the introduction of the Mass at Hadleigh, and was committed to prison on refusing to yield. When condemned, Bonner came to him, as to his companions, to degrade him, and to force him to put on the dress of a Romish priest. But for once he felt himself put to shame, for Taylor resisted every attempt to force on him the hated vestments, and when at last compelled to yield, treated the matter with such contempt that Bonner would have struck him with his crozier had not his chaplain prevented him.

On the way to Hadleigh the sheriffs tried their utmost to persuade him to recant, urging every motive they could, but in vain. Coming within a mile of the village, his cheerfulness made every one wonder. "I lack not past two stiles to go over," said he, "and I am even at my Father's house." Finding

he was to go through Hadleigh, he thanked God that he would see once more before he died the flock whom he had loved so heartily and taught so truly, and prayed God to keep them stedfast in His word of Truth. The streets were thronged on both sides of the way, as he passed, with men and women waiting to see him, and tears and sighs broke from all as he came in sight, with tender outcries of love and grateful pity. At the poor's house he threw to those at the doors what money he had remaining of that by which friends had supported him in prison. Having reached the spot where he was to die, he found a great multitude gathered, who no sooner saw "his reverend and ancient face, with a long white beard," than they burst into tears, praying that "Jesus Christ would strengthen him, and the Holy Ghost comfort him;" but on his essaying to speak, he was at once hindered. Taking off all his outer clothing, he gave it away, as having no further use for it, and then tried once more to speak, but received a blow on the head with a cudgel from one of the executioners, and was thus forced to desist. Having prayed, he went to the stake, kissed it, and then took his place in a pitch-barrel set for him, and stood with his back to the stake, continually praying. One of the guard, as they were piling the faggots, threw one at his face, and cut it so that the blood ran down. But the only rebuke he received was, "O friend, I have harm enough; what needed that?" As he kept repeating the 51st Psalm in English, a priest struck him on the mouth, with the words, "Ye knave, speak Latin; I will make thee." But the end was near, for the fire was now kindled, and the martyr holding up both his hands, and crying aloud, "Merciful Father of Heaven, for Jesus Christ my Saviour's sake, receive my soul into thy hands," stood still, without either crying or moving, his hands folded together, till one of the men round, with a halbert, struck him on the head so that his brain was exposed, and his body sank down into the fire.

Bradford had been sentenced with the four thus burned, but

he was kept for a future example. The prisons were daily filling with others, for Chancellor Gardiner and Mary were of one opinion, that heresy must be purged from the land by fire, though the one was moved by a fierce revenge, and the other by relentless bigotry. But it might have been already clear to both that they had begun a hopeless struggle, for men had at last risen to genuine heroism for the Gospel, and would not recant as they had done of old. On the 9th of February, five days after the condemnation of Hooper and the others, six more were sentenced by Bonner to die—a weaver, a butcher, a barber, an apprentice boy, a priest, and a gentleman. Their crime was denying that the wafer was God. On the 9th of March two more were condemned, and seven of the whole were burned at different parts of the diocese before the month's end—two at Smithfield, four in Essex, and one at Colchester, the last having to sit in a chair at the stake, his legs having been so crushed by irons in Bonner's prison that he could not stand. It was an ominous sign for Gardiner that, everywhere, the people showed the liveliest sympathy with his victims, and a fond anxiety that they would be faithful to the end. Even the children round the stake of the mangled Colchester victim had cried, "Lord, strengthen thy servant, and keep thy promise!"

Robert Ferrar, Bishop of St. David's, was the next victim. He had incurred the furious hatred of his cathedral chapter for trying to reform their vices and bring them to a pure and Christian life, and had been summoned to London and thrown into prison on the most frivolous charges in the last dark days of Northumberland's protectorate. He also had now, on the 4th of February, been brought before Gardiner, for, though a man specially blameless, he had been married, and was already in the toils. On the 30th of March, after degradation from the priesthood,—for he had been deprived of his bishopric before,—he was burned in the market-place at Carmarthen. Three more victims were sacrificed before the end of April.

In that month the hopes of Mary, that she would bear a child, came to a head, only to end in bitter disappointment. Misled by the progress of dropsy, she had had prayers drawn up and offered in all the churches for the expected heir to the throne. Papers also had been printed to announce to foreign courts that it was a prince, and were only kept in reserve till the happy moment of the birth. Te Deums had been chanted in praise to God for the expected event. At length, on the 30th of April, the moment seemed to have come. The bells rang in all the churches; bonfires were piled ready for lighting, and a Te Deum was sung in St. Paul's. Yet no child was born. Mary, however, felt as yet no misgivings. Priests marched in procession through the London streets singing litanies, even at midnight, by the light of torches. The paupers from the almshouses; the boys from the schools, with their masters and ushers; the civic dignitaries; the trades guilds, and even the bishops, with more or less free will, had similar marchings and litany singings of their own. Still no child came. From confidence the unhappy queen fell into anxiety, and gradually into wild despondency. It slowly became clear that she was ill of a mortal disease, but May passed before she gave up all hope. With wasted and worn features and swollen person, the wretched woman would sit on the floor, praying and hoping, and hoping and praying, that God would not forsake her. To brim her misery, papers once more strewed the rooms, telling her that her people loathed her.

It seemed to her distempered soul that God must have withheld the blessing so fervently craved, because of some sin she had committed, and this, she fancied, must have been want of zeal in uprooting heresy. She therefore drew up a letter to the bishops, to urge them to greater activity in this holy work, and under this quickening fifty more Protestants were burned within the next three months, in the dioceses of London, Rochester, and Canterbury. But the blood of the martyrs then, as always, proved the seed of the Church. "You have lost the hearts of twenty

thousand who were rank Papists within this twelve months," wrote a lady to Bonner. Everywhere the abuses of the Protectorate were being quickly forgotten in the presence of the virtues and heroism of the sufferers, and of the monstrous cruelty of Romanism. The crowds round the stake looked on the victims as men dying for their country, for Protestantism began now to be held English, while Popery was becoming hated as a foreign and bloody superstition. Hence any weakness at the stake was dreaded as a defection from the great cause. "God be praised!" shouted the multitude, in their joy, when one sufferer, having talked and prayed so long that they feared he would recant, at last rose and took off his cloak, "God be praised! the Lord strengthen thee, Cardmaker; the Lord Jesus receive thy spirit." Every fresh death was a triumph over the common enemy; every sufferer kindled enthusiasm for the faith in many bosoms, and deepened their ever-widening hatred of Rome. "How many living members of Christ are thrown into the flames!" wrote one in these days. "Shall Winchester[1] always live?"

Meanwhile, Pope Julius III. had died in March; his successor had reigned only three weeks; and now, to Pole's great disappointment, Peter Caraffa, a man haughty and ambitious, even for a Pope, had won the tiara as Paul IV.[2] No less would content him in England than the restoration of the Church lands and property, and he annulled, by a bull, all alienations of them in the past, without exception. Nothing could have been more favourable, in the existing state of affairs, for the Reformers, for such demands provoked a fierce resistance. "He thinks it but a very small plunder that is offered him," wrote one of the exiled Protestants, "that he is again permitted to tyrannize over our consciences, unless the revenues be restored to the monasteries,—that is, to the pigsties. God grant he may urge his demands in every possible way!

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[1] Gardiner.

[2] May 26, 1555.

Perhaps those who have suffered the Gospel of Christ to be taken from them by threats, will not allow these revenues to be taken away even by force."[1]

[1] Sir Richard Morison to Bullinger. Orig. Letters, 148.

CHAPTER XXVI.

"DRUNK WITH THE BLOOD OF THE SAINTS."

MARY found to her sorrow that even the burning of heretics failed to secure the longing desire of her soul. It was not, indeed, till July that she finally abandoned all hope of bearing a child who should restore the Church, and lead back a golden age of the Romish Church, but when the dream finally melted, the shock was terrible. Instead of a second Holy Mary giving earth a second Saviour, as her courtly flatterers had hinted even in the pulpit, she found herself a dying woman. The interval was an intensely anxious one for the Protestants. Men dreaded that some supposititious child should be foisted on the nation as Mary's, to secure the succession to the Spaniard and Popery. Elizabeth, the hope of the future, was in danger. She was still at Woodstock, virtually a prisoner, and harshly treated. But the fading of Mary's dream saved her, by fixing on her more than ever the hope of the nation. It was impossible even to detain her longer in restraint, and she was set at liberty, though forbidden the court.

But Mary's griefs were not yet full. Her husband had been with her a little over a year, and had long ago shown his indifference to her, and his longing to go away. The abdication of his father, the emperor, now made it even more necessary that he should do so, for he was the heir of Spain, Naples, the Indies, and the Low Countries, which that act handed over to him. On

the 26th of August Mary was carried to her barge in an open litter, surrounded by guards fully armed, and parted from Philip at Greenwich, in the vain hope that he would keep his promise of returning erelong. She was only too soon to discover not only that he would never come back, but that he had regarded his marriage as a hateful sacrifice to state policy, and was giving himself up to low immorality, though Cardinal Pole had taught her to believe, in a prayer he had drawn up, that he was made in the image of the Saviour.

Such accumulated griefs acting on a mind clouded like hers by superstition, drove her more and more to fierce homicidal madness. She was the daughter of a man who shed blood like water when it pleased him, and she had been trained to believe that heretics, like the ancient Canaanites, were to be rooted out from the land. Her chief, indeed, latterly, her only adviser, was Cardinal Pole, a man naturally gentle, but so perverted by a false theology as to mistake bloodthirstiness for a supreme religious duty. Gardiner and Bonner had kindled the flames, but the fierce hatred they drew on themselves had made them pause. Pole and Mary, however, were not moved by public opinion. The bishops held their commissions to burn Protestants from Pole, and thus were his agents; and under these commissions, in Canterbury alone, his cathedral city, eighteen men and women were burned, while five died of starvation in the city gaol, and numbers were brought to the stake in other parts of the diocese. Torquemada himself was amiable in private life, and so pre-eminently was Sir Thomas More, the self-styled "hammer of heretics."

Cranmer, Latimer, and Ridley still lay in prison at Oxford, where a fresh trial was ordered before Brooks, the new Bishop of Gloucester, Holyman, Bishop of Bristol, and White, Bishop of Lincoln. The three had been consecrated with eight more, in 1554, to replace the Protestant bishops of Henry and Edward's time. Brooks and Holyman, now gorgeous in their scarlet hoods and their frills, died before Mary, and White was deprived

in 1560 as an irreconcilable Papist. Before this court Cranmer was brought on the 7th of September, in his black gown, leaning on a stick, under charge of the city guard, and was arraigned for blasphemy, incontinency—that is, for being married—and for heresy. Approaching the bar, he uncovered to the two proctors for the queen, but steadily refused to do so to Bishop Brooks, the President, alleging, with all courtesy, that having sworn never to admit the authority of the Pope in England, he could not honour them. On the proctor's rising, after an address from Brooks, Cranmer protested with dignity against the lawfulness of the court, saying that he would make no reply to any charge, except on the ground of being bound to answer every man as to his hope in Christ Jesus. He then proceeded to defend his repudiation of the jurisdiction of the Pope in England, but of course with no effect. The charge of blasphemy was thus settled against him, and then came the others. As to his two marriages, he defended them as every way justifiable, and as to his writings, he frankly owned them. He was then cited to appear before the Pope in eighty days, and meanwhile was taken back to close confinement, which precluded his possibly doing so.

Ridley and Latimer were next brought before the court—over which the Bishop of Lincoln now presided—but they had no such safeguards of Papal ordination as had delayed the martyrdom of Cranmer. They had lain in prison for over two years. Ridley, a Newcastle man, had been head of Pembroke Hall in Cambridge University, from which he received his doctor's degree, after returning from study in France. His learning and ability having attracted Cranmer's notice, he got him made Bishop of Rochester in 1547, after Edward's accession, and Bishop of London on Bonner's deprivation, in 1550. His piety, learning, and judgment, marked him as a foremost Reformer, and his earnestness made the Romanists specially hate him. To a sermon of his before Edward, we owe the existence of St. Bartholomew's and Christ's Hospitals in London, for both had been seized as monastic property by Henry VIII., and were given

back for their present uses only through Ridley's appeal to the young king. Among the people his popularity as a preacher was unbounded.

To the advantages of a persuasive eloquence Ridley added those of a comely person, both in face and figure, though rather under than over the middle height. His character, moreover, was blameless, his life simple and pure; his courtesy and kindness felt by all.

When led into court, Ridley stood before it bareheaded, but he put on his cap when the cardinal and the Pope were named, declining, like Cranmer, to own their authority in England. Refusing to remove it, it was taken off by a tipstaff. The charge against him was his denial of transubstantiation and the propitiatory sacrifice of the mass, although he held that "Christ was *in* the sacrament as the Holy Ghost in the water at baptism." But he had to add the fatal words that "yet Christ was not the sacrament, as the Holy Ghost was not the water." It was enough that he believed the bread and wine, after consecration, were still what they seemed. Brooks told him, as was usual, that "they were not come to condemn him, for bishops condemned no one, but only to cut him off as a heretic from the Church, whom the temporal judge might punish as he chose." For once, however, the miserable subterfuge met an appropriate answer. "I thank the court," replied Ridley, "for their gentleness, being the same which Christ had of the high priest. *He* said it was not lawful for *him* to put any man to death, but committed Christ to Pilate, yet would not suffer *him* to absolve Him, though he sought, by all the means he might, to do so."

Latimer, who had been kept waiting outside, was now led in. He was at least seventy years old,[1] and his life-long feeble health made him even more infirm than his age. True to the simplicity of his character, though, perhaps, the foremost man then living in England, he appeared with his hat in his hand; a handkerchief

[1] I follow Demaus. Life of Latimer, p. 5.

on his head, over "a nightcap or two," and, above them, a great cap such as townsmen use, with two broad flaps to button under the chin. The cold and wretchedness of the Oxford prison needed such care of so feeble a life, for it was from an Oxford jail that the terrible plague spread, a few years later, which killed ninety-five persons in the first six days.[1] He wore an old threadbare Bristol-frieze gown strapped to his body by a penny leathern girdle, from which his Testament hung by a long string of leather: his spectacles, with their case, tied to a tape thrown round his neck, lay on his breast.[2]

Bowing his knee in respect, the venerable prisoner stood before the judge to listen to the indictment, first with his head leaning on his hands, then with his cap and kerchief off, to hear the better, and finally he sat down. When he came to answer, right manfully was it done, with homethrusts of telling argument, expressed in inimitable wit and grave humour, as striking as any appearance in his best days. He was clearly more than a match for his judges, for he actually brought against them with confusing force, as a sample of unsound teaching, a book published by Brooks himself, then sitting to judge him. Next day, after the condemnation of Ridley, he was again brought up, and required to answer questions which they knew must ensnare him. Like Ridley, he would not hear of the bread and wine being changed by any words of the priest into the "corporal flesh and blood of Christ," and for refusing to say that they were so, he was condemned to die.

Fifteen days later came the ceremony of degradation, in which Bishop Brooks, degrading himself, was to play the chief part. Having once more offered Ridley his life if he chose to recant, Brooks, on his declining, requested him to put off his cap and put on a surplice, but Ridley stoutly refused. The men round were then ordered to do it by force, and Ridley submitted, saying, that if Christ bore all that was done to Him, patiently, it

[1] Barton's Life, 120; see also p. 336 of this book. [2] Foxe, vii. 529.

became His servants to be like Him. They then put on him "the surplice and all the trinkets appertaining to the mass," Ridley all the while inveighing vehemently against the Pope and all that foolish apparel, calling him Antichrist, and the apparel foolish and abominable—too foolish, indeed, for a Vice in a play." Brooks, furious at such a bearing in his victim, ordered him to be silent, but Ridley protested that he would denounce "their abominable doings" while he had breath, and was only silenced by a threat of gagging him. When the wafer was brought, he would not touch it, and it had to be held in his hands, till the Popish form of degradation was ended. When it was over, he wished to speak, but was told there could be no discussion with one cast out of the Church. He then urged that he had a paper which touched only worldly affairs, and he was allowed to read *it*. It was a petition to the queen to restore some leases to poor men from whom Bonner had taken them, ruining the sufferers by doing so. Among other requests he begged that care might be taken of his widowed sister and her three children, and it was noticed that he wept as he mentioned her name.

The next day he and Latimer were burned. The stakes were set up "upon the north side of the town, in the ditch over against Balliol College," where the Martyrs' Memorial now stands. Provision had been made, by the queen's letters, for armed force to be present, to hinder any attempt at rescue, and when everything was ready the prisoners were brought out by the mayor and bailiffs.

Ridley, who was now approaching sixty, wore a "fair black gown, furred, and faced with foins"—that is, with marten's fur—"such as he was wont to wear when a bishop, and a tippet of velvet, furred with sable, on his neck, a velvet nightcap on his head, and a square college-cap over it, with a pair of slippers on his feet." After him came Latimer, "a tall old man, in a poor Bristol-frieze frock, all worn, with his buttoned cap, and a kerchief on his head, all ready for the fire; a new long shroud

hanging over his hose, down to his feet," for like Bernard Barton, he had had his shroud prepared beforehand.

Cranmer was busy disputing with Friar Soto as the two passed his prison, and so lost the chance of a last farewell moment with them—a moment that might have nerved him for his own future, and kept him above temptation. Ridley, looking back, and seeing Latimer coming after, greeted him—"Oh, be ye there?" "Yea," said Latimer, "I have after as fast as I can follow." So, at length, they both came to the stake, "the one after the other, Ridley first—his eyes presently lifted, marvellous earnestly towards heaven, holding up both his hands;" then, shortly after, seeing Latimer, he ran to him "with a wondrous cheerful look," embraced and kissed him, adding—"Be of good heart, brother, for God will either assuage the fury of the flame, or else strengthen us to abide it."

With that, Ridley went again to the stake, kneeled down by it, kissed it, and prayed earnestly; Latimer kneeling behind him and praying by himself. A sermon of a quarter of an hour's length was then preached by a Dr. Smith, who, having written a book against the royal supremacy in Edward's time, had since publicly recanted all it had said, but was now a fiercer Romanist than ever. Ridley, wishing to reply, was not allowed, unless he gave up his "false opinions," but he answered that as long as the breath was in his body, he would never deny his Lord Christ, and His known truth. Latimer added, for his part, that "he could answer Master Smith well enough, if it might be suffered, but there was nothing hid but it shall be opened."

They were now told to make themselves ready, and obeyed with all meekness. Ridley took off his gown and tippet, and gave them to his brother-in-law, who had lived in Oxford all the time of his imprisonment, to provide him necessaries, though not allowed to come near him. Other parts of his dress he gave to others, and some parts were claimed by the bailiffs. His friends round stood, meanwhile, "weeping pitifully," and to them, likewise, he gave some last gifts, such as he had—a new

groat to one, a napkin to another, a nutmeg to a third, a rase of ginger to a fourth. Some plucked the points off his hose, so eager were all to get some memorial.

Latimer gave away nothing, for he had nothing to give, but very quietly suffered his keeper to pull off his hose and other garments, which were very simple, "and, being stripped to his shroud, seemed as comely a person as one should lightly see; for whereas in his clothes he appeared a withered and crooked, weak old man, he now stood bolt upright, as comely a father as one might lightly behold."

Having been stripped to his shirt, Ridley stood up on the stone at the stake and thanked God that He had called him to profess His name even unto death, and prayed that England might be delivered from all her enemies, and that the Almighty would have mercy on her. The two were then bound to the stake by iron chains riveted round their waists, and a bag of powder was hung from the neck of each. And now, once more, Ridley pleaded with Lord Williams, who superintended the execution, that he would use his interest for the poor men, and for his poor sister, for whom he had already interceded to the queen. Even in the last moment his thoughts were on others, for their good.

A blazing faggot was now brought and laid at Ridley's feet, on seeing which, Latimer, brave to the end, gave him some last parting words of counsel. "Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man. We shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out,"—Words to be grandly fulfilled for ever!

"And so the fire being given unto them, when Dr. Ridley saw it flaming up towards him, he cried with a wonderfully loud voice, in Latin, 'Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit: O Lord, receive my spirit,' and then repeated this latter part often in English, 'Lord, Lord, receive my spirit:' Latimer crying as vehemently on the other side, 'O Father of heaven, receive my soul.' He received the flame as if embracing it.

After that he had stroked his face with his hands, and as it were bathed them a little in the fire, he soon died, as it appeared, with little pain or none."

But Ridley had a sore trial. The pile had been badly made, a heavy load of faggots smothering the gorse underneath, which should have kindled them. Feeling this, he desired them for Christ's sake to let the fire come to him, but his brother-in-law, misunderstanding him, threw on still more faggots, to rid him of his pain. This, however, only made the fire more vehement beneath, and burned his limbs before his body was even touched, so that he leaped up and down, entreating them to let the fire rise on him, and crying out that "he could not burn." Yet in all his torment he still called upon God; the prayer, "Lord, have mercy upon me," intermingling with his cry for speedier death. At last one of the bystanders, with his bill, pulled off the faggots above, and then, when the martyr saw the fire flame up, he wrested himself to that side. And when the flames touched the powder he was seen to stir no more, but burned on the other side, falling down at Latimer's feet.

Thus died these two famous witnesses for Christ. Nor was their faithfulness without reward either then or since. As the news spread far and wide over England, with all the story of their manly bearing and bitter end, there rose in the great heart of the people a bitter hatred of that system which had slain such men, in such a way, in the name of religion.

Meanwhile, the prisons were full of Protestants. The Lollards' tower under the clock of the present St. Paul's, Bonner's coal-house, and the prisons of the Legate Pole, at Canterbury, were the scene of unspeakable horrors, compared with which the stake was merciful. Men and women, guilty of no crime but that they refused to believe that the wafer was turned into God by a few words of a man like Bonner, or that the Church which burned the saints was the only true Church, were beaten, bound in irons, starved to death in foul dungeons, or left with no covering but their own clothes and no bed but rotten straw, in

cold, darkness, and misery, through the wild winter months. Bonner, above all men, was associated with these hideous cruelties. "Every child can call you by name," wrote a lady to him, "and say, 'Bloody Bonner is Bishop of London.'" His doings were repeated on every tongue, and everywhere turned men against Rome.

Gardiner had been very impatient to have the bishops burned, and delayed his dinner, on the day it was to be done, till the news should be brought him that the fire was kindled.[1] Presently, however, he fell ill, and after lingering for less than a month died on the 13th of November. In him Mary lost her ablest counsellor, but the Reformation its most cunning and relentless enemy. Himself base-born, he had fiercely denounced marriage in priests, while he was privately living unchastely: revengeful, treacherous, and without pity, he could dissimulate till the time came to strike: resolute to carry his end, he could keep it before him and work towards it even when outwardly giving way.

Meanwhile Parliament had met, but rather to thwart Mary in some of her cherished projects than to advance them, and thus she was thrown more than ever on her own efforts to further the great aim of restoring Popery, to which all her desires tended. She began, at her own cost, to rebuild some of the religious houses, and familiarized Englishmen once more with the hated sight of monks and friars. Soured in spirit, she gave way continually to ever fiercer outbursts of passion, and unfortunately she could indulge these without check, at the cost of the Protestants.

Cranmer had been kept in prison during the time in which it was required of him to appear in Rome, and had appealed to Mary to let him die by the sentence of an English court, without humbling his country by asking that of a foreign power. His object had been to be burned with Latimer and Ridley,

[1] Burnet, 338.

that their company might strengthen his faith. But a subtle plot was on foot. Gentle and yielding by nature, it was hoped that he might perhaps be induced, after all, to recant, for the humiliation of the head of the Reformation would be a wondrous triumph for Popery. A Spanish friar was therefore set on him, to weary him out by perpetual worrying, and to break down his firmness by long-protracted waiting for his fate. In December, the Pope, after holding a mock trial at Rome, confirmed the sentence of the Oxford court, and in February Bonner and another appeared in Christ Church Cathedral, to degrade him. An appeal which he made to a General Council was disregarded, but his making it seemed to show that, at last, he was anxious once more for life. Led back to the pleasant house of the Dean of Christ Church, instead of to prison, he was once more plied with temptations to yield. His treatment was rather that of a guest than a prisoner, for he had every possible indulgence, and every mark of real or pretended regard. All around pressed him to give way, the legate himself sending him a long letter urging it with all the persuasions of rhetoric. He had refused to flee when flight was open to him, and had ventured his life daily for many years for the truth: but the arts used so skilfully to make him waver, the doubts if he were right after all, so natural in a soft and modest nature, and the thought that some equivocal form of words might at once save his honour and give him back his life, led him in the end to write a few lines saying, that, as the king and queen, by consent of Parliament, had received the Pope's authority within the realm, he was content to submit himself to their laws, and to take the Pope for the chief head of the Church of England, as far as God's laws and the customs of the realm would permit. A document like this was of no value as a recantation, but such as it was, it was instantly sent to the queen. Five other papers were subsequently published by Bonner as additional submissions volunteered by him, or extorted from him, but Thomas Sampson, a clergyman, one of the Marian exiles, speaks of a

"certain absurd recantation, forged by the Papists, which began to be spread abroad during Cranmer's life-time, as if he had made it: but the authors of it themselves recalled it while he was yet living, and he firmly and vehemently denied it."[1] The continuator of "Fabian's Chronicles," moreover, speaking of the burning of the archbishop says, "after he had recanted his *supposed* recantation." The truth seems to be[2] that while Cranmer signed the first equivocal and illusory acknowledgment of the Pope which avowed all his old principles, even in seeming to waive them, the other papers, purporting to be further submissions, were fabricated by Bonner's directions.

A month more was let pass, during which these pretended recantations were diligently circulated. If genuine, they fully entitled him to his life; but on the 21st of March he was suddenly brought out to die. It was so wild a morning that the sermon usual at burnings could not be preached at the stake, and was therefore delivered in St. Mary's Church. To burn a man after his having, as was alleged, recanted, was, on the face of it, a monstrous cruelty and injustice, and had to be excused as it best might. While the preacher tried thus to palliate the crime he was set to defend, Cranmer stood with "his face wet with tears, an image of sorrow, retaining ever a quiet and grave behaviour, which increased the pity in men's hearts."

It was now hoped that he would seal his weakness by some further public statement, and he was therefore allowed to speak, but, to the horror of the Romanists in his audience, he repudiated with the greatest earnestness any apparent concessions he had made, declaring that "forasmuch as his hand offended, in writing contrary to his heart, it should be first punished, for if he could reach the fire, it should be first burned." "As for the Pope," he went on, "I utterly refuse him, as Christ's enemy and Antichrist, with all his false doctrine; and as for the sacra-

[1] Orig. Letters, 173; date, April 6, 1556, a fortnight after Cranmer was burned.

[2] Southey's Book of the Church, 348.

ments, I believe as I have taught in my book against the Bishop of Winchester." He would have gone on, but cries rose on all sides, "Pull him down," "Stop his mouth," "Away with him," and he was hurried out of the church to the stake, a quarter of a mile off, where Latimer and Ridley had suffered.

The wood was skilfully laid and was dry, and, once kindled, presently blazed strongly. As the flames rose, Cranmer stretched forth his right hand, calling out, "This was the hand that wrote it, therefore it shall first suffer"—and so saying, he held it steadily in the fire, "and never stirred nor cried." A short time more, and the flames had left him a blackened corpse. So died Thomas Cranmer, tempted for a moment, like Peter, to waver, but like him in his repentance as well as his weakness. His life is his best memorial. It speaks, through long years, of his gentleness, his readiness to forgive, his meekness, his bounty, his zeal, his large-minded liberality of thought, and his splendid services to evangelical religion. The English Bible, the Articles, and the Prayer-book are his imperishable monument.

Cranmer's death, so evidently a matter of personal revenge on the part of Mary, for her mother's sake, proved as fruitless as all before it, to frighten England from heresy. A wide-spread conspiracy was presently formed to dethrone the queen, and set Elizabeth in her place, but it was discovered and quenched in blood. Men had come universally to believe that Philip was about to land an army from Flanders, to crush English liberty, and the old hatred of the Spanish marriage, which had led to Wyatt's rebellion, became a deepening passion with the nation as the queen showed herself more and more a slave of the priests. The popular hatred of her had, indeed, risen to such a pitch that she dared not show herself in public. Deserted by her husband, she had virtually resigned the government to Pole and a few Popish fanatics, survivors of her mother's household.

Insane with religious bigotry, and embittered by her terrible

disappointment respecting a child; a widow while married; sinking under painful disease, and conscious of universal hatred, Mary grew daily more wild in her bursts of passion, and more ferocious towards Protestants. The plot against her life reacted against them. In January, five men and two women were burnt at one stake in Smithfield, and one man and four women at Canterbury. In March, two women were burnt at Ipswich, and three men at Salisbury. In April, six men were burnt at Smithfield; a man and a woman at Rochester, and another at Canterbury. Six, sent to Bonner from Colchester, were allowed only till afternoon to say they would recant, and were then condemned, and sent back to Colchester and burnt. A blind man and an aged cripple were burnt in the same fire at Stratford. In May, three women were burnt in Smithfield, and two at Gloucester the day after, one of them being blind. Three were burnt at Beccles, in Suffolk; five at Lewes, and one at Leicester. In June, Bonner's ferocity outdid all his former wickedness, for on the 27th he burnt eleven men and two women in one fire, at Stratford, in the presence of twenty thousand people. Nor was this reckless cruelty confined to England. Attempts were made even in Antwerp to seize some of the exiles who had fled thither, and in Guernsey a mother and her two daughters were burnt at the same stake. One of the latter, a married woman, in the agony of the flames, was delivered of a son. A stander-by forthwith snatched it from the fire, but it was taken from him and thrown back again into the flames. Nor is there any doubt of this, for the matter was afterwards inquired into under Elizabeth. Sixty-seven had been burned in 1555, of whom four were bishops, and thirteen priests: in 1556 eighty-five, without regard to age or sex, or even physical infirmities. No wonder the Reformation once more took wide root. The blind savagery of the government was in fact making the whole nation Protestant. For one cause or other sixty men were sentenced, in the autumn, at Oxford, to be hanged together, and rows of gibbets lined the

Thames, with bodies swinging from them in the wind. In August, twenty-three men and women were brought from Colchester to London, tied together with ropes, to be condemned and burnt, but the people cheered them so as they passed through the streets that Bonner was afraid to sentence them, and they were allowed for the time to escape.

Meanwhile the Pope had leagued himself with France, to drive the Spaniards out of Naples, and thus Philip, to Mary's horror and his own, found himself at war with the Holy Father. But Alva speedily repelled the invasion, and Philip humbly suing for absolution after his victory, of course obtained it. By the end of the year famine, caused by the bad harvest, was driving London to madness. The poor were glad to feed on acorns, and infants were left at the doors of the rich, to save them from starvation. To Pole these calamities seemed only another proof of the anger of God, for the lenity with which Protestantism had been treated. With the beginning of 1557 a new commission was given to Bonner and twenty others to hunt down heretics more vigorously. The laws were suspended, and any one might be arrested at the will of the commissioners, of whom three were to be a quorum. Sellers of heretical books and all suspected of heresy, even on such negative evidence as their neglecting the confessional, abstaining from mass, or from walking in priestly processions, or from using holy water, were left at the mercy of the new inquisitors. If Philip and Spain still left England the show of self-government, they had at least succeeded in setting up in her the worst of all Spanish institutions—the Holy Office of Torquemada.

Pole had been consecrated Archbishop of Canterbury the day after Cranmer was burnt, amidst bitter applications of Elijah's words to Ahab—"Thou hast killed and taken possession."[1] Mary and he had now all power between them. Every allusion to the sins of monkish orders, in the reports and other documents of

[1] Burnet, 347.

Henry's days, was ordered to be destroyed: new monasteries multiplied, and courtiers began to seek favour by founding chantries, for masses to be said for their own souls and those of their ancestors. A rigorous visitation was ordered in the diocese of Canterbury, in which the clergy were required to report the opinions and life of every parishioner of either sex. Even the dead were no longer respected. Commissioners were sent to Cambridge to purge the university from the taint of Protestants having been buried in its precincts. Bucer[1] and Fagius,[2] two Continental Reformers, had come to England in 1549, on Cranmer's invitation, and after being his guests and counsellors at Lambeth, had been appointed to chairs in Cambridge, Bucer as the professor of theology, Fagius as that of Hebrew. Bucer had died, worn out by his trials and labours, in 1551; Fagius had preceded him to his reward in 1549, six months after his arrival in England. They had each been buried in one of the university chapels, and this was now held to pollute the whole place. Both chapels were put under an interdict. The two dead men were taken from their graves and cited to appear before the visitors. But as they continued silent and no one ventured to appear to defend them, they were duly condemned as obstinate heretics, and their bodies burned along with a heap of Prayer-books, Bibles, Primers, and other Protestant books which had, meanwhile, been gathered from the various colleges.

From Cambridge the visitors—three bishops and a Venetian friend of Pole—passed on to Oxford, where the wife of Peter Martyr had been buried in the cathedral. But as she had never spoken English, and had lived a retired and blameless life, it was hard to establish her heresy. She had, however, once been a nun, and had afterwards married a Protestant, and for this Pole ordered her body to be taken up and cast out of holy ground, especially as she was buried near the holy virgin St. Frideswida. The mouldering

[1] Born in Alsace in 1491.

[2] Born in the Palatinate, in 1504.

corpse was therefore exhumed, and thrust into a cesspool. But time brings its revenges, for Elizabeth afterwards ordered it to be raised again and decently buried, and with it were interred the remains of the saint she had defiled by her presence!

The persecution raged, under such auspices, with redoubled fury, through the spring and summer of 1557. In January, six were burned in one fire at Canterbury, and four in other parts of Kent. In April, three men and a woman were burnt in Smithfield. In May, three were burnt in Southwark, and three at Bristol. Five men and nine women were burnt in Kent, in June, and in the same month, six men and four women were burnt at Lewes. In July, two were burnt at Norwich, and in August, ten were burnt in one day at Colchester—part of the twenty-two led, some time before, through London streets, tied to one long rope, but let go then for fear of the people. In August, also, one was burnt at Norwich, two at Rochester, and one at Lichfield. But even this wholesale slaughter did not satisfy the priests. They complained that the magistrates "were backward, and did their work negligently." The queen's Council, therefore, sent out fresh letters, urging the towns to choose more zealous men as mayors, that Protestantism might be finally stamped out. In September, three men and a woman were burnt at Islington, and two at Colchester; one at Northampton, and one at Laxfield. At Norwich, another woman was burnt, and Chichester had a grand Auto da Fe of fourteen men and three women, one of the men being a Protestant clergyman. In November, three men were burnt at Smithfield, and a clergyman and a woman from Islington closed the holocaust of the year in the same place. Seventy-nine English men and women, in all, were burned alive in 1557.

A fresh trouble had come on Mary and Pole together, in these last months. Philip had urged the queen to get England engaged on his side in his war with France, then the ally of the Pope, and this had so infuriated his Holiness that he cancelled Pole's commission as legate, and appointed Peto, the Greenwich

friar of Henry's day, in his place. Mary, however, was not to be treated thus lightly. She forbade Peto to land in England, and wrote to the Pope for a reconsideration of the whole question. But Paul—a peevish, spiteful old man—would not relent, and made matters worse by hinting that Pole's opinions were not above suspicion. He who had spent his life in treason against his country for the sake of the Church, was disgraced as, after all, hardly himself sound! The death of the martyrs could not have been more bitterly avenged!

The war with France had been marked, in 1557, by the victory of St. Quentin, but 1558 was clouded by what seemed then the extremity of national disgrace—the loss of Calais in the first week of the year. It had been in the hands of England since 1347—in the days of Edward III.—that is, for more than two hundred years, and was the last memorial of the French conquests of past glorious days. The mortification of the whole country was intense. It seemed as if nothing but the priests throve under Mary. The country was defenceless: there was no money in the exchequer, and the captors of Calais might very probably invade England presently.

Parliament, which met on the 20th of January, had a gloomy task before it. Subsidies of extraordinary amount were needed to put the land in a state of defence, and the levies had to be called out through England, to guard against expected invasion. So excited was public feeling, that every able-bodied man, of any rank, between sixteen and sixty, was to be ready, on pain of death, to take arms when summoned.

The session closed on the 7th of March, and the burnings, which had been suspended during its continuance, lest the bishops might be called to account for their cruelty, once more began. Cuthbert Simpson, a Protestant preacher in deacon's orders, was the first to suffer. He had been taken at a meeting for worship in Islington, and was put on the rack, but no severity could extort from him the names of his friends, and he was therefore burnt in March, at Smithfield, with two others.

In April, one was burnt at Hereford, and in May, three were burnt at Colchester. Stung by the insinuations of the Pope, Pole issued a new commission to clear his diocese of heresy.

The priests boasted that only another year was needed to purify England, but never were men more misled by their wishes. Sullen despondency and discontent spread far and wide. Even the fear of a French invasion failed to kindle enthusiasm. In Devonshire, the musters disbanded themselves; in Lincolnshire they mutinied. The exiles in Germany, roused by the news of the terrible sufferings of their brethren in England, openly urged insurrection to end such a tyranny. John Knox, then at Geneva, published his "First Blast against the Monstrous Regiment, or Rule, of Women." Other books, similarly bold, were also issued. To be dared thus, touched Mary to the quick, and roused the worst characteristics of her Tudor blood. Thrusting aside all law, she issued a proclamation "that if any one received any of these books, and did not presently burn them, without either reading them, or showing them to any person, they were to be executed immediately by martial law."

But, in spite of all the burnings and threats, nothing could bend the firm spirit of the victims, and, what was worse, the people continued to cheer them on their way to execution. To put an end to this, if possible, a proclamation was sent out forbidding any one to approach, touch, or speak to them, or even to pray for them, as if the tyranny of Rome could hope to come between men and their secret cries to their God in this hour of darkness. But the English spirit was roused, and returned a bitter defiance to Mary's menaces. A congregation of Protestants had been surprised at a prayer-meeting, in a field near London, by the government spies, who filled the whole country. Thirteen were taken before Bonner, and of these seven were burnt together in Smithfield in the end of June, the people crowding round the stake and vying in every demonstration of sympathy and encouragement to the sufferers. Bonner, terrified at the spirit thus shown, could not venture to burn the other six

in London, but, to prevent their escaping, he tried them at his palace at Fulham, and burnt them at Brentford in the dead of night. A Protestant minister also was burnt at Norwich in July. In August the flames received twelve victims, at Winchester, St. Edmundsbury, and Ipswich. Pardon had hitherto been offered, in every case except Cranmer's, if the victim recanted at the stake, but even this spark of humanity was now forbidden, for the sheriff having extinguished the fire at a burning at Winchester, when the victim screamed out that he recanted, orders came from the Council to burn the unfortunate creature at once, and the sheriff was thrown into prison for his presumption. "The queen's majesty," said the letter of Council, "could not find it but very strange that he had saved from punishment a man condemned for heresy: the execution was to proceed out of hand."

The 10th of November saw the last fires of this terrible time lighted at Canterbury, to burn three men and two women, whom Pole himself had condemned. Mary was now within a few days of her end. On the 16th, at midnight, she received extreme unction, and, as she was evidently sinking, mass was said at her bedside. Unable to speak or move, her eyes remained fixed on the Host as the priest raised it for her adoration, and presently her head sank, and she was dead.

The number burnt in the three years of the persecution had not been far from 300, at the lowest reckoning. Great numbers besides had been thrown into prison, where not fewer than sixty had died of hunger, cold, and cruel treatment. The whip and the rack had been freely used, till the country was outraged by the stories that spread far and wide. To this fanaticism, however, on the part of Mary and her advisers, we owe the revival of Protestantism as the fixed creed of England. Its good name had been soiled by the abuses of Edward's time, when greedy politicians used it to further their plundering the Church, to the uttermost, for their own advantage. Had Mary taken a moderate course, she might have re-established Romanism as the

national faith, and put back the Reformation no one can tell how long. But her Spanish marriage and the un-English bloodthirstiness she sanctioned in her advisers, and showed in her own temper, threw a halo round the cause for which men died so bravely, and revealed unmistakably the true nature of the corrupt system which hunted them to death.

Nor was there wanting a characteristic in the persecution which secured its being wholly ineffectual. Except in the cases of the bishops, the sufferers were taken only from the humbler ranks, though it was notorious that there were Protestants in the queen's own guard, and in every grade of the nobility. With these, however, Mary was afraid to meddle. Women and children, the workman from his bench and the peasant from the field, the blind, the lame, and the helpless, had been her victims, while the powerful remained, to effect a revolution as soon as Elizabeth mounted the throne. She had spared those who were sure to reverse her policy the instant she was gone.

No one had ever a fairer opportunity of being beloved by the nation, and no one ever made her name more loathed. Her mother's story, her own treatment by Northumberland, and the very fact that she was the first English queen, had been in her favour, but in a reign of little more than five years she had made herself the object of national execration. Well educated, rigidly honest, simple in her tastes, and pure in her life, she ruined all, and made herself an everlasting abhorrence to England, by the one fact that she was an abject slave of the priests.

By a strange coincidence in their fate Pole died at Lambeth a few hours after Mary.

CHAPTER XXVII.

"THE PROTESTANT REFORMED FAITH" ESTABLISHED.

THE accession of Elizabeth, on the 17th November, 1558, filled the whole nation with such joy that, even a generation later, it was cherished as "a day shining graciously to many poor prisoners, who long had been wearied in cold, and heavy irons, and had been bound in the shadow of death; unto whom she came as welcome as the sweet shower cometh to the thirsty land, and as the dove that brought the laurel-leaf in her mouth came to faithful Noah and his family, after they had been long tossed in the miraculous deluge."[1] The loss of Calais, the wholesale burning of men, women, and children over the land, the miserable state of the country, with its empty treasury, its debased coinage, its decayed defences, and its general distress, united all parties to welcome the new reign. Mary had died just before daylight on the late November morning, but by eight the chancellor, Archbishop Heath, was at the bar of the Lords, to tell the two Houses that the Princess Elizabeth was queen. Parliament, of course, stood necessarily dissolved by the announcement, and forthwith the heralds, attending a commission of the Lords, were on their way through the London streets, proclaiming the new sovereign. All day long the steeples rang their merriest, and at night the sky was red with

[1] Harsnet's Sermon on the anniversary of the Accession, 1601.

bonfires. Men felt that England was once more free from the dark arts and tyranny of Rome.

Yet the position of the new queen was grave in the extreme. As put in a document of the time, "She herself was poor; the realm exhausted; the nobility poor and decayed; good captains and soldiers wanting; the people out of order; justice not executed; all things dear; excesses in meat, diet, and apparel; division among ourselves; war with France; the French king bestriding the realm, having one foot in Calais and the other in Scotland"—by the marriage of the young Queen Mary to the Dauphin;—"steadfast enemies, but no steadfast friends."

The "division among ourselves" was, indeed, the worst in this catalogue of evils, for it was religious, and as such touched the deepest passions of men. At least two-thirds of the nation still nominally belonged to the old faith, from habit, or choice, or from mere English aversion to change. The Protestants were found chiefly in the large towns and cities, though the burnings under Mary had shown that the peasants also, in some shires, were largely touched by the New Doctrine. But though Protestantism was thus in the minority, the future of England inevitably belonged to it, for it meant freedom as opposed to slavish submission; the independence of the intellect and conscience, as opposed to the rule of a ghostly despotism over both. However men might differ on doctrinal details, they were everywhere at one in their hatred of the reign of priests. The iniquities of the bishops' courts as revived under Mary; the monstrous claims of the priesthood over the conscience; their thirst for wealth, power, and class privileges, and their keenness to shed blood, had turned England for ever from the system to which they belonged.

There was, in fact, an irreconcilable opposition between Romanism and Protestantism of every shade. The Romanist believed in the authority of the Church; the Protestant in the right of private judgment: the one yielded his conscience abso-

lutely to the priest, the other subordinated his to God alone. The Romanist believed in the Pope, as the visible representative of Christ on earth, and in the hierarchy, which he called the Church, as the depositary of all spiritual truth: the Protestant looked on the Pope as Antichrist; on the clergy as only the ministers of the Church, not the Church itself, which, in his view was "the blessed company of all faithful people;" and the one supreme depositary of truth he acknowledged was, not the priesthood, but the Bible. The Romanist believed that the priests, by virtue of an alleged official descent from the apostles, held mystical power, which conferred grace, absolved sin, and changed bread and wine into the flesh and blood of Christ: the Protestant recognized in the clergy only the ordained teachers and ministers of his faith, and knew no distinction between them and the laity, except of training and office. The Romanist, satisfied with the teaching of the Church, was contented to leave the Bible to the learned; the Protestant held that it was to be diligently and reverently studied by all, as the Word of God. The one dreaded its spread as tending to heresy: the other multiplied translations and sought to introduce them to every household. The Romanist held that the merits of Christ could be made ours only through the sacraments, and that these could be administered only by a duly ordained priest. The Protestant received the sacraments as divine institutions and aids to faith, to be administered by the clergy, but he ascribed to them no sacramental efficacy as dispensed by their hands, and held that the merits of Christ were bestowed on the soul only in answer to sincere and humble faith. The one believed in a purgatory from which masses could redeem him: the other treated the doctrine as a juggle to get money. The one adored images and relics, and ascribed miracles to both: the other turned the images out of the churches; looked on the relics as worthless bones and rags, and flouted the miracles ascribed to both as lying tricks and inventions. The one looked up to heaven through a vista of mediators,—the priest, the saints, and the

Holy Virgin: the other believed that there was only one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus.

Thus the two systems stood in absolute and irreconcilable opposition, for one was the embodiment of individual liberty and direct responsibility to God, while the other was the assertion of unlimited priestly authority, and the demand for silent obedience. The Romanist knelt at the foot of the priest: the Protestant bowed only before his God. To attempt a compromise between two such opposites was to seek to harmonize contradictions. Light and darkness; fire and water, could as well be mingled. The Protestant abhorred Romanism as idolatry; the Romanist was bound by his creed to look on Protestantism as a mortal sin, nor was it allowed him to recognize any opinions but his own as having a right to be tolerated in the Church or even in the world.

The accession of Elizabeth at once showed the fierce antagonism between the two faiths. The London mob hurriedly tore down the new crucifixes raised under Mary. Any priests who were seen were hustled and forced to hide. As the good news spread, the exiles in Germany and Switzerland hastened back. They included multitudes of laymen, and a great many of the evangelical clergy, but, unfortunately, their return brought with it elements of discord. Fierce disputes had broken out in the different English communities abroad respecting the liturgy and much else. By some, the Genevan Presbyterian ideas had been adopted: others had warmly retained the liturgy published under Edward, as not only good in itself, but hallowed by having been borne in their hands to the stake by many of the martyrs. Some wished a change in stray doctrinal expressions in the Prayer Book, and in details of ceremony in the offices of the Church: others would fain have had liturgical forms entirely forbidden. Thus the leading divines now round Elizabeth were as a whole more or less affected by their intercourse with Continental Churches. Nor could their views be lightly ignored, for their rank as reformers gave them a supreme claim to be

consulted, at least in details. To use Milton's words, they were "the pastors of the saints and confessors who had suffered and died for evangelical truth. They had fled from the blood persecution, and had gathered up at length their scattered members into many congregations. These were the true Protestant divines of England, our fathers in the faith we hold."[1] Well had it been for our Church if what was true and noble in their ideas had been generously accepted, while whatever was pedantic and fanciful, or really opposed to episcopal government, was gently set aside. Unfortunately the spirit of Henry survived in his daughter, for to neither did it ever occur for a moment that the nation had any right to decide for itself, in any question either of religion or politics.

That something must be done to settle religious affairs in the nation was recognized from the first. Within a few weeks of Elizabeth's accession a body of divines, under the leadership of Guest, afterwards Bishop of Rochester, was appointed by Cecil, the queen's confidential counsellor, to revise the Prayer Book and remove the offensive alterations made under Mary. Four lords formed, with Cecil, a committee of council for communication between them and the queen, who, Tudor-like, claimed to reject or approve what she pleased of their draft. Meanwhile, any change in the public services, before Parliament had authorized it, was strictly forbidden by proclamation.[2]

Mary had died on the morning of the 17th of November, but two months elapsed before Elizabeth was crowned at Westminster Abbey.[3] She had spent the week before, according to custom, in the Tower; once her prison, now her palace. Thanking God, in a short but striking prayer, for her deliverance from past danger, she set out through streets crowded with rejoicing multitudes, for London was the centre of Protestantism, and she was its hope. Fountains ran wine; allegorical pageants in the fashion of the times delayed the procession, at point after

[1] The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates.

Strype's Annals, i. pt. ii., app. 4.

[2] Jan. 15, 1559.

point. The Corporation met her in Cheapside and presented her with a copy of the English Bible, which she kissed, thanking them for their gift, and promising to read it diligently. Though it was January, fresh flowers were handed her even by poor women as she rode on amidst "such welcomings, cries, tender words and prayers as the like have not commonly been seen."[1] At the coronation, mass was sung, as if things were still to remain unchanged, and the Romish bishops generally were present.

At Mary's death the episcopal bench was entirely Romanist. But death had been strangely busy with it in the brief interval, and this, with the vacancies at her accession, left Elizabeth more than a dozen sees open to Protestants. Nothing could have been more fortunate for the Reformers. But bishops could not be appointed till the Marian laws respecting the Pope's supremacy had been repealed.

On the 25th January, Parliament met in a very different humour from the last. Horror at the persecutions had secured a strong Protestant majority, for, even where they were the more numerous, the Romanists were for the time afraid or ashamed to put themselves forward.

When business began, the change from the past was at once seen. A Bill to reannex the first-fruits of ecclesiastical benefices to the crown was at once introduced. Given back by Mary to the priests, their loss had caused the serious diminution of the revenue, but they were now restored to Elizabeth so readily, that in four days the Bill had passed the Lords, notwithstanding the outcries of the Romish bishops.

Proposals for taxation followed, with the striking novelty of the clergy being made liable, without being consulted. Henceforth, Parliament was to know no distinction of citizens in their obligations as such. Next came an earnest address to Elizabeth, entreating her, for the sake of the nation, to marry. Her single life stood, apparently, between it and anarchy, and

[1] Foxe, viii. 673.

from Philip, her sister's widower, down, suitors were eager for her hand. On the 11th, the English litany was once more read in the Lower House, the members devoutly kneeling, and two days after a Bill for restoring the Royal Supremacy was introduced. The bishops, however, fought so earnestly against it, that the discussion was repeatedly adjourned, for in the Upper House, the Romanists, as yet, had things all their own way.

Meanwhile, Convocation had been in session as well as Parliament, and showed that had it been left to the Marian clergy, Romanism would have been confirmed as our national religion. A protest was drawn up by the two Houses against any religious change, and avowing their firm adherence to Romish doctrine. The natural body and blood of Christ, they maintained, were really present in the Sacrament, by virtue of the words duly spoken by the priest. After consecration no other substance, said they, remained. The mass was declared to be a propitiatory sacrifice: "Peter and his successors were Christ's vicars and supreme rulers in the Church, and authority in all matters of faith and discipline belonged, and ought to belong, only to the pastors of the Church, and not to laymen."

The same clerical resistance to all change that had marked the past was to repeat itself under Elizabeth.

Peace had been made with France by the 12th of March, and thus one great difficulty in the way of domestic legislation was removed. Next day, the Supremacy Bill was again brought forward, and it was finally passed with a single verbal alteration, afterwards made at the direction of the queen, Elizabeth and her successors being once more declared the Supreme Governors, under God, of the Church of England. Thus the Pope was finally dethroned. "The Pope is again driven from England," writes Parkhurst, afterwards bishop of Norwich, to Bullinger, "to the great regret of the bishops and the whole tribe of shavelings."[1]

[1] Zurich Letters. Elizabeth, 38.

The political question thus settled, the religious remained to be considered. From the clergy no help could be expected, for they had with striking unanimity proclaimed themselves uncompromising Romanists. Outwardly, things remained as they had been under Mary. The mass was still offered in the churches, and though the Litany and parts of the Communion Service were read in English, the Romish ceremonial was still everywhere observed.

To change the theology of the nation without at least an appearance of participation on the part of the clergy, would, however, have seemed unbecoming. A discussion was, therefore, arranged between eight speakers on each side—the Romanist and the Protestant, at Westminster Abbey.[1] Of the Romanists five were bishops : of the Protestants only one : the rest were exiles, who had saved their lives by escaping to the Continent, and had now returned. The subjects for deliberation were :—

1. The use of prayer in Latin.
2. The right of national Churches to reform their ceremonies.
3. The question whether the Mass was really a propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead.

Public discussions of theological matters had often been tried in the past, and had always embittered differences rather than removed them, and the result was the same in this case. Things had, moreover, been so arranged that the bishops should have the lead, and be followed, in each case, by the Reformers; but to this they objected, on the fair ground that it was for the assailants of the doctrines of the Church, to state their objections to them, and for themselves to reply. Two days were spent in heated and useless recriminations, which ended by a formal demand for this modification of the arrangements. The Lords and Commons, and a large audience, had been listening to the

[1] March 31st.

speeches, which were made in English; Sir Nicholas Bacon, the lord keeper, and the Archbishop of York, presiding on behalf of the queen and the Church respectively: but the whole scene was soon felt to have no practical value. The demand of the bishops brought matters to a crisis, for when the lord keeper replied that the order of debate could not be changed, they at once definitely refused to go on. But even so slight a manifestation of independence was criminal under a Tudor. The queen had prescribed the form of the meeting, and it was not even for bishops to dare to suggest an alteration. They were told forthwith that the discussion was ended—and by their fault. "But," added the lord keeper, "forasmuch as ye will not that we should hear *you*, you may perhaps shortly hear of *us*." What this meant was presently seen. Two of the bishops were forthwith committed to the Tower for contempt, and for having also threatened to excommunicate the queen,[1] and the others were ordered to remain in London, and appear daily at the Council Chamber till their case was decided.

The bishops and clergy had professed to accept the reforms of Henry and Edward's time, but Mary's reign had rekindled their old zeal for Popery, and they had now formally taken its side by the petition of Convocation and by the attitude of the bishops in this discussion. It was clear, that, as a body, they had simply submitted, in empty show, to any reforms, while still, at heart, as Romish as ever, for though some of them doubtless rejected the political claims of the Pope, they were unchanged in everything else.

Nothing remained but that the State should take the matter in hand, if any doctrinal or other reforms were to be made, and once more prescribe to the ecclesiastics a creed and a polity which they repudiated. They had already accepted and sworn to uphold and teach what they now asserted they did not believe; it was to be seen whether they would submit to do so a second time to keep their preferments.

[1] Fuller, ii. 512.

Parliament met again on the 3rd of April, and at once began ecclesiastical business by modifying a few words in the Supremacy Act which the queen wished to change. She had objected to the title of The Supreme Head of the Church, and therefore the same dignity was expressed in the words that the crown became once more "in all causes, ecclesiastical as well as civil, supreme." It was moreover required of the bishops and clergy that they should renounce the Pope as a condition of holding their benefices, and accept the queen as Supreme Governor of the Church in his place. Under Henry, refusal had been punishable by death, as treason, but the true spirit of Protestantism was now beginning to make itself felt, and deprivation alone was to follow.

Thus began the enactment of a series of statutes which make this session for ever memorable in England. The Acts of Henry IV. and Henry V. against heretics, by reviving which Mary had been able to burn her victims, were again repealed. Henceforth nothing could be regarded as heresy unless it had been condemned by the first four general councils, or was contrary to Scripture, or might hereafter be specified as heretical by Parliament and Convocation.

The commission, under Guest, to revise the Prayer Book had meanwhile submitted their finished labours to Elizabeth, but they were too thorough to meet her ideas. The Reformers had, indeed, already felt their position difficult. It was said among them that Christ had been, before, *cast out* by His enemies, but was now *kept out* by His friends.[1] The queen was wonderfully afraid of allowing any innovations, though she openly favoured the cause of the Reformers.[2] "Under the cruel reign of Mary," wrote Dr. Cox, the tutor of King Edward, and afterwards Bishop of Norwich, "Popery so much increased both in numbers and strength, that it was hardly to be imagined how much the minds

[1] Bishop Jewel to Peter Martyr. Zurich Letters. Reign of Elizabeth, 28.
[2] Ibid. 23.

of the Papists were hardened; so that it was not without great difficulty that our pious queen, with those about her who stood forth with alacrity on the side of truth, could obtain room for the sincere religion of Christ. Meanwhile, we (the reforming divines), that little flock, who, for these last five years, have been hidden in Germany, are thundering forth in our pulpits, and especially before our queen, that the Roman pontiff is truly Antichrist, and that traditions are for the most part blasphemies. At length many of the nobility, and vast numbers of the people, began to return to their senses; *but of the clergy none at all.* For the whole body remained unmoved."[1] The mass had already been discontinued in some churches without authority, and the people began to join in the singing at public worship. It was noticed, moreover, that the bishops, to avoid being assailed with the cry of *butchers*, seldom went abroad.[2]

Dr. Guest and his fellow-commissioners recommended that the second Prayer Book of Edward, which was much more thoroughly Protestant than the first, should be adopted, but the queen would not sanction it without some changes. It was too Protestant for her taste. The Reformers were, in fact, apparently without exception, desirous of a simpler worship than she would permit.

Yet, as presented to Parliament, and appointed by it for use in public worship, the new Prayer Book varied only in a few points from that last issued under King Edward. The most important alteration appeared in the sentences at the delivery of the elements, in the Communion Service.[3] But this was from no desire on the part of the Reformers to make an approach to the Roman doctrine of the mass, which they cordially abhorred. It had to be done to please Elizabeth, for though she had left St. Paul's before mass was celebrated,[4] she retained it in her

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[1] Dr. Cox, May 20, 1559. Zurich Letters. Reign of Elizabeth, 36.
[2] Zurich Letters. Reign of Elizabeth, 40.
[3] See pages 428, 429, note. [4] Ellis Letters, 2nd Series, ii. 262.

private chapel. Apart from her personal feelings, moreover, which were, religiously, Romanist, and only politically Protestant, she had determined on creating a compromise, as far as possible, between the Old Party and the New, to secure the support of both. The Romanist was to be attracted by seeming recognitions of his doctrines in the standards of the Church, while the Protestant was to find these endeared to him by the embodiment of that for which he contended. In the special case of the Communion Office, however, this policy was doubtless less painful to conservative Reformers, since the alterations formed an effective protest against the Zwinglian doctrine of the Lord's Supper being only a commemoration of our Saviour's death. Like the Presbyterian Churches, the Church of England, while firmly opposed to the idea of any corporal presence of Christ in the institution, has always maintained the spiritual, though, to use the words of Hooker, "The real presence of Christ's body and blood is not in the sacrament, but in the worthy receiver;"[1] a doctrine which the Universal Church, in its widest sense, may well receive.

The retention of any trace of the Old System in the Prayer Book gave great offence, from the first, to the more advanced Reformers, and was hereafter to excite disputes which rent the Church asunder. It is, indeed, to be profoundly regretted that, rather than slightly change a few words, however introduced, an apparent support of Romish doctrine should have been given, which has been and still is the excuse for attempts to restore Romanism in our Church.

Yet it is to be remembered that to have framed a book which would have perfectly satisfied all was impossible, for Protestant freedom means unrestricted criticism of any standard. The wonder is that so admirable a success should have been attained, for what Englishman does not reverence the Prayer Book as a whole, even if he take exception at some isolated

[1] Eccles. Polity, Bk. v. 224.

words? It must not be forgotten that the "meaning of the Reformers was not to make a new Church, but to reform according to the primitive model,"[1] though in this they undoubtedly were forced by the crown to leave their work imperfect. The later Puritans would have ignored the ages of the Church before the Reformation, but the Reformers wisely sought to retain whatever in them was good, and reject only what was the reverse. "Such things," says Archbishop Whitgift, "as we now use in the Book of Common Prayer,—though some of them have been used in the name of Papistry,—were appointed in the Church by godly and learned men, before the Pope was Antichrist, or the Church of Rome greatly corrupted. Is Papistry so able to infect the Word of God, godly prayers, and profitable ceremonies, that they may not be used in the Church reformed, the errors and impieties being taken away?"[2]

Unfortunately for the peace of the Church, the Prayer-Book, as left by the Commission, was in some details more favourable to Puritan opinions than was agreeable to Elizabeth and Cecil. The surplice was allowed, but no special vestment was to be used at the Communion, and it was even left indifferent whether communicants should stand or kneel.[3] On the latter point the queen required uniformity, and ordered that communicants should kneel; but all mistake as to the meaning of the act was made impossible by a note explaining that "no adoration is intended, or ought to be done, either unto the sacramental bread or wine there bodily received, or unto any corporal presence of Christ's natural Flesh and Blood." The royal decision respecting vestments and ornaments was a more serious cause of regret, for it appointed the Prayer Book of 1549 as the standard, instead of that of 1552, which was much more Protestant. Cox, Grindal, Horn, Sandys, Jewel, Parkhurst, and Bentham, future bishops and archbishops, resisted a step so dangerous

[1] Lathbury's Hist. of the Common Prayer, 69.

[2] Whitgift's Defence, 474. [3] Proctor's Hist. of Common Prayer 38.

and reactionary,—in common with the mass of the Reformers,—but the iron will of Elizabeth, with a woman's fondness for show, would make no concession. Convocation was not even consulted in a matter so singularly within its province. The Reformers, says Strype, "laboured all they could against receiving into the Church the Papistical habits, and that all the ceremonies should be clean laid aside. But they could not obtain it from the queen and Parliament, and the habits were enacted." Most of them, having just returned from exile, had not yet begun their ministry, and so serious did the matter appear, that they hesitated for a time whether they should not stand aloof from the Church till the obnoxious order was repealed. "Then they consulted together what to do," says Strype, "being in some doubt whether to enter into their functions. But they concluded unanimously not to desert their ministry for some rites, that as they considered, were but a few, and not evil in themselves, especially since the doctrine of the Gospel remained pure and entire."[1]

The excitement for the time, however, was very great. Jewel was fierce against "the theatrical habits," and "the scenic apparatus of divine worship," and wroth that "*we*," the Reforming divines, were not consulted. Sampson, afterwards Dean of Christchurch, and offered a bishopric, turned earnestly, with others, to consult the German Reformers as to his duty in the matter, and, indeed, all the Reformers were in great trouble. But the queen, Tudor-like, carried out her will, and Parliament, as usual, obeyed her pleasure.

Yet, if they could not succeed in preventing the first Prayer-Book of King Edward being made the rule for vestment and ornaments, the Reformed bishops, presently appointed, managed at least quietly to ignore requirements they themselves so much disliked. The earlier vestments, &c., were not generally introduced, and it was openly said even by the bishops that the

[1] Strype's Annals, i. 1 263.

rubric was not intended to be compulsory, but merely to legalize the usages of the royal chapel.[1] Thus the Church owes it not to her own authorities but to the arbitrary will of Elizabeth, that a law was imposed upon it which well-nigh rent it in pieces at the beginning: which divided the nation into dissent and conformity: which in the days of the Stuarts brought the Church to ruin; and which in our own day, as in that of Laud, has been used to justify the Romanizing of our communion. It is a fitting comment on the blind tyranny of such a proceeding, that these hated vestments and ceremonies, to enforce which thousands of the best of the clergy were driven out of the Church, were never generally worn; that for generations, since, they were unknown to English congregations, and that they are now pronounced illegal by the highest court of the realm.

The new Prayer Book was ordered by Parliament to be introduced in June, 1559, and was received with widespread joy, for it decided the future of England as Protestant. Where exception was taken at any details, a solution was found for the time, even by the bishops, in quietly evading what they disliked; a course, which, however undesirable if permanently adopted to a material extent, was indispensable in the first introduction of a new system—if the peace and unity of the Church were to be maintained. Indeed, even under the old Church an absolute uniformity of service had not been demanded, for Rome had tolerated no fewer than seven different "Uses" in different districts of England. Nor was it possible of attainment, at least at once, when the desire to please both sides had raised conscientious scruples respecting points of greater or lesser importance.

Unfortunately, Elizabeth, in her lofty conception of her prerogative as Supreme Governor of the Church, failed alike in the wisdom and tenderness its situation demanded. Rigid compliance was imperatively demanded with even the most offensive

[1] Strype's Annals, ch. 4, p. 83.

requirement. A mechanical uniformity was instantly to prevail in the least particular. No one would dream, even now, after three hundred years, of enforcing a rule so tyrannical, nor is it felt that the many variations in subordinate matters which still obtain in even the moderate sections of the Church, are followed by any injurious results.

But an imperious will was now to insist on a course unavoidably disastrous, and a succession of prelates was unfortunately found, weak enough to carry out the fatal policy to its harshest particular, with the result, during Elizabeth's reign alone, of driving out one-third of the clergy, and they the best in the Church. The only palliation of such a course is the hardly flattering one of the inflexible determination of Elizabeth that it should be followed. Even an archbishop had to choose between suspension and blind obedience. Archbishop Grindal, in 1576, for a touch of gentleness to the Puritan clergy, then much like our Evangelical clergy now, was at once suspended, and was never restored, though Convocation and the highest statesmen in the land interceded that he should be so. He had written a letter pleading for some slight relaxation of the odious Uniformity Act.

What made matters still harsher and more impolitic was that the parties were so nearly balanced.

Thus, in the first Convocation held after 1559—that of 1563—a petition presented in the Lower House, proposing that the Psalms should either be sung by the whole congregation, or simply read by the minister—choir, or artistic singing and organ accompaniment to them being dispensed with—that only ministers should baptize (not women also) and *that* without signing the cross on the child's forehead—that kneeling at Communion should not be compulsory—that no vestments except the surplice be retained—that the Act of Conformity should not be absolutely binding in everything—and that festival days should either be done away with, or the services on them limited to morning service alone—was rejected only

by fifty-nine to fifty-eight votes.[1] In such circumstances could there have been no mutual arrangement made, on points involving neither doctrine nor church order, to save the Church being literally rent in halves? Who will not regret that unbending resistance on such indifferent things should have left the bitter legacy of divisions and strife we have had from it ever since?

The new Act of Uniformity came into force on Midsummer's day, 1559, and to their honour fifteen of the old bishops refused to stultify themselves by abjuring the Pope once more. Among others, Bonner stood out, and was at once imprisoned, "a jail," says Fuller, "being conceived the safest place to secure him from the people's fury, every hand itching to give a good squeeze to that sponge of blood."[2] The clearance of the bench by this and other causes enabled Elizabeth to appoint no fewer than twenty Protestant bishops within a short time.[3] But it throws a startling light on the difficulties in the way of the Reformers, that fewer than two hundred of the clergy preferred to resign rather than comply with the new oath, though Convocation had unanimously voted for Popery in its completeness only a few months before, and when even such a witness as Dr. Cox tells us that, of the clergy, "none at all" joined the Protestant movement. With the pulpits filled with men thus perjured for bread, the wonder is, not that the Reformation met with difficulties, or that some abuses were overlooked, but that so much was effected.

The Articles were still needed to complete the new ecclesiastical constitution, but they were not added till 1563. Then, at length, England was once more definitely a Protestant country.

If any object that there are even yet some things in our National Church that need reform—and I know not who would deny it—it is to be remembered that it is the growth of fourteen

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[1] Schoell, art. "Puritaner." Herzog, xii. 364.

[2] Fuller's History, ii. 512.

[3] Ibid. ii. 519.

hundred years, and may well have contracted blemishes in their long course which it is more easy to point out than to remove. It would be well for us all in this matter to remember the homely saying of a clergyman of another venerable communion when twitted with faults in it, from which the bran-new system of the objector was free. "When your chimney has gone as long," meekly replied the apologist, "*it* will need sweeping too." Nor can it be said that this sweeping is not even now going on. If unanticipated movements have revealed points needing attention, it only shows that laws cannot be made beforehand against unexpected dangers, while the cases so often before the courts prove how earnestly these dangers are opposed now they have shown themselves. The Church of England has never spoken of finality in its calm and measured self-reform, but, in this very generation, has advanced with a steadfast purpose towards the purer and loftier ideal which all human institutions must ever keep before them.

Nor can I find a nobler testimony to its services in the past and its characteristics now, than in the words of John Angell James, the late honoured Nonconformist minister.

"Its Scriptural doctrines," says he, "are the themes with which Luther and Cranmer and Calvin and Knox assailed the Papacy, and effected the Reformation; its divines have covered its altars with works more precious than the finest gold of the ancient sanctuary of Israel; its literature is the boast and glory of the civilized world; its armoury is filled with the weapons of ethereal temper which its hosts have wielded, and with the spoils they have won in the conflict with infidelity, Popery, and heresy; its martyrology is emblazoned with names dear and sacred to every Protestant; and at the present moment are to be heard from many hundreds of its pulpits, truths at the sound of which —accompanied as they are by the life-giving power of the quickening Spirit—the dead in trespasses and sins are starting into life, and exhibiting a people made willing in the day of His power, which shall be as the dew of the morning."

But the benefits secured for England and the world by the Reformation, are not limited to the creation of the Church of England, great as her services have been, and still are, to the best interests of humanity. The principles it vindicated are the hope and the noblest heritage of mankind.

It was the revolt of the human intellect and heart from mental and moral slavery. Christianity had brought such liberty at first; Protestantism was its resurrection, after priestcraft had slain it, as it had slain its Founder.

It asserted triumphantly, once and for ever, the absolute freedom of the conscience in all our relations to our fellow-men. Rome had demanded blind obedience to the Church,—that is, in effect, to the individual priest,—literally, on pain of hell. Protestantism, for "the Church," put God. It accepted no human Church or Church institution, as free from error or the possibility of it, either in itself, its acts, or its utterances.

It held up the Scriptures as the supreme rule of faith and practice, and put them in the hands of all, that they might follow them for themselves. It allowed no man to stand between the soul and its Maker. It held that salvation depends on no human mediation, or priestly acts, but flows directly from the self-revelation of God in His Word. It taught that the merits of the sacraments are dependent on no act of a priest, but on the direct communion of the soul with Christ.

It claimed the right of private judgment in all demands on our belief, and thus made each man's conscience responsible only to God. While gratefully accepting all aids and ministrations to guide to a decision, that decision was reserved absolutely to the individual himself.

In the political sphere it embodied the same grand principles. It demanded that no man should suffer for his religious opinions; a principle long opposed, but now, at last, admitted to the full, in the rejection, by every English-speaking nation, of all religious disabilities. Force cannot be used, under Protestantism, to compel acceptance of opinions which conscience denies.

It secured protection to all in their fidelity to conscience. The right of all was established to express freely their religious convictions, and to associate themselves with others in a public profession of these. Thus all men were made free to form themselves into new religious societies, so long as the opinions advanced were not clearly opposed to the public welfare. This principle also is recognized in all English-speaking nations.

It not only sanctioned, but imposed as a sacred duty, the frankest investigation of all questions. Its unchanging motto was and is "Prove all things." It was henceforth impossible in Protestant countries, to imprison a Galileo, or to keep an Index Expurgatorius, and it became a religious duty to secure a sound education to the child of the poorest citizen. The very essence of Protestantism is to seek for more and more light.

It taught that men become true members of Christ, not by any priestly acts, or by mere outward connection with "the Church," or obedience to it, as the vital condition, but by a living and active faith in Christ, shown by a holy life. And since this faith, which alone justifies the soul, is a personal act between it and God alone, the soul is responsible for its faith to no one but Him.

It proclaimed that all true believers, over the whole earth, form, as such, the one true invisible Church, whose members are known surely to God alone, and will in the end be acknowledged by Him at the Great Day.

As to the results of these great principles, to which more might be added, they are seen on every hand.

They have made England independent of an Italian priest-prince. She, alone, now makes her own laws, and is mistress in her own house. Not only so, they have forced Rome to abate its pride towards the State everywhere. Since the Reformation, she has seen it wise to give up her excommunications and interdicts of kingdoms, her dethroning kings, her claim to present to all Church livings, to send bulls where she likes, to tax nations at her pleasure for her own exchequer, or to cite

citizens and even monarchs for trial before Roman priest-lawyers in a Roman court.

They have freed the land from monks and monkery, which even Romanist countries have since put down as an intolerable evil. They have abolished that most fruitful source of immorality, the celibacy of the clergy, and have made layman and ecclesiastic, alike, subject to the civil courts. They have exploded the doctrine of purgatory—that richest mine of priestly wealth and popular superstition. They have removed from between the soul and God the crowd of priests and saintly mediators, and taught men to go to Christ rather than to the Blessed Virgin, or to the glorified dead,—to go to the Head rather than to the feet,—as one of the Protestant martyrs put it.

They have dispelled the belief that a sinful man, who calls himself a priest, can judicially absolve a man from his sins. They have swept away from amongst us the hateful system of compulsory Secret Confession—have purified our churches from miracle-working pictures and images, and have turned to ridicule the thousand inventions and impostures by which Rome kept her hold on the souls of men. They have given us spiritual communion with Christ in the Eucharist, instead of the belief that a fragment of bread is changed by the priest into Christ Himself, and eaten as such. They have given us a pure and simple worship in our own language, instead of the endless bowings and kneelings, the vestments, and incense, and lights, and thousand ceremonies of Rome. They have given us the Bible, with its divine wealth of heavenly and earthly wisdom, in our own tongue. And, to crown all, by securing for us the fullest civil and religious liberty, they have made England, here and over the world, wherever her institutions have gone, the envy of every nation.

I have no fear that our country will ever part with such a heritage. To no land is freedom dearer. Britain knows how her fathers went to the stake to drive out the priest from her borders, and it will not let him re-enter them to rule. Like all

other citizens, he may enjoy his religion and publicly preach it, but let him beware of doing more. As to the "Conspirators," England loathes them, and will not rest till they be ejected from a Church whose wages they take while they betray her faith.

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Butler & Tanner, The Selwood Printing Works, Frome, and London.